MUTUAL CRITICISM.

"Happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending."—Much Ado About Nothing.

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN SOCIALIST,

ONEIDA, N. Y.

1876.

PROPERTY OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

MUTUAL CRITICISM.

"Happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending."—Much Ado About Nothing.

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN SOCIALIST,

ONEIDA, N. Y.

1876.

MUTUAL CRITICISM.

CRITICISM is no new thing under the sun. It is at least as old as art, literature and public life. The writers, artists and orators of early Greece and Rome felt its power. The authors whose works now constitute the classics of English literature ran its gauntlet as truly as any Bohemian of our time. The terrible castigations which public men receive to-day are not more severe than those administered in the days of Demosthenes and Cicero. Only Criticism, calling to its aid every modern means of communication, has become more omnipresent.

But MUTUAL CRITICISM—systematized as a means of culture—is a new institution, and of such value, in the opinion of those who have most thoroughly tested it, that its origin, philosophy, manner of application and results, deserve to be more generally known.

In the following article, which was first published

in the *Congregational Quarterly*, April 1875, Mr. J. H. Noyes gives the history of

THE ORIGIN OF MUTUAL CRITICISM.

My object in writing is to acknowledge, and, if possible, pay a debt which I owe to Congregationalism.

Mr. Nordhoff, in his late work on *the Communistic Societies of the United States*, takes pains to exhibit by examples a system of *Mutual Criticism* which is practiced in the Oneida Community, and in his concluding speculations on the advantages of Communism and the essentials of success in it, he again refers to that system in the following terms:

* * * "Finally, there should be some way to bring to the light the dissatisfaction which must exist where a number of people attempt to live together, either in a Commune or in the usual life, but which in a Commune needs to be wisely managed. For this purpose I know of no better means than that which the Perfectionists call 'criticism'—telling a member to his face, in regular and formal meeting, what is the opinion of his fellows about him—which he or she, of course, ought to receive in silence. Those who cannot bear this ordeal are unfit for Community life and ought not to attempt it. *But, in fact, this 'criticism,' kindly and conscientiously used, would be an excellent means of discipline in most families, and would in almost all cases abolish scolding and grumbling.*"—*Nordhoff's Communities, page* 413.

In the *Congregationalist* of January 28th there is a notice of Mr. Nordhoff's book, in which his "amusing" description of a criticism which he witnessed at the Community is quoted, and another use that might be made of the system is suggested, thus:

"*We wonder how criticism would work as a means of grace in some of our churches?*"

Now, the good thing I wish to do is to give the *history* of this system of *Mutual Criticism;* first, because that history really belongs to the *Quarterly* as the representative of Congregationalism (as I am about to show), and secondly, because the usefulness of such an institution ought not to be limited or hindered by a misapprehension of its origin. The truth is that *Mutual Criticism* as a "means of grace" was not invented by me or by the Oneida Community, but was practiced in the very innermost sanctuary of the Congregational Church, more than forty years ago, and owes its existence to the same great afflatus that gave birth to the Missionary Societies, the Bible Societies, and all the other institutions of modern religious benevolence. The proof of this statement I will now proceed to give.

In an account of my own religious experience, which I published in 1844, I stated where I first found and practiced and submitted to criticism, as follows:—

"In consequence of my decision to become a missionary, soon after I entered the Theological Seminary at Andover, my connection with the missionary brethren became very intimate, and I was admitted to a select society which has existed among them since the days of Newell, Fisk, etc. Among those with whom I was thus associated, I remember Lyman and Munson, who were killed by cannibals some years ago on one of the islands in the East Indies: Tracy, who I suppose is now in China: Justin Perkins, the Nestorian missionary, and Champion, who went to Africa, but subsequently returned and died. One of the weekly exercises of this society was a frank criticism of each other's character for the purpose of improvement. The mode of proceeding was this: At each meeting, the member whose turn it was to submit to criticism, according to the alphabetical order of his name, held his peace, while the other mem-

bers, one by one, told him his faults in the plainest way possible. This exercise sometimes cruelly crucified self-complacency, but it was contrary to the regulations of the society for any one to be provoked or complain. I found much benefit in submitting to this ordeal, both while I was at Andover and afterward."—*The Perfectionist*, *April* 20, 1844.

I cite this old record because it was written and printed several years before the existence of the Oneida Community, and before any attempts were made to practice criticism among Perfectionists. In the course of last year, 1874, Mr. Henry W. Burnham, a member of the Oneida Community, undertook to follow the clew furnished in the above paragraph of my religious history and was led into a very interesting investigation. He obtained at Andover the names of twelve living persons who had been members of the secret society above referred to, and addressed to each of them a copy of the following circular:

"DEAR SIR:—I am engaged in some historical researches relating to the early interest in the cause of Missions at Andover Theological Seminary, and I have been advised to apply to you for information on certain points. What I wish to know is the history of a secret society of missionaries called 'The Brothers,' which is said to have originated at Williams College, with Mills, Fisk, Newell and others, and was existing at Andover certainly in 1832,—how much longer I cannot say.

"If you belonged to that society, or knew any thing about it, will you be kind enough to tell me what you remember about a system of *Mutual Criticism* which was practiced in it? I have been informed that each member, in turn, offered himself and was subjected at the weekly meetings to the free remarks of all his brethren on his faults. I should like if possible to ascertain when and with whom this practice

originated, and how long it was continued. Any other information which you may think proper to communicate about 'The Brothers' will be gratefully received.

"Yours respectfully, H. W. BURNHAM."

In the course of a few months answers were received from nine of these persons. Some of them were unable to recall any thing of importance relating to the special subject of criticism; but nearly all expressed enthusiastic interest in the memories which Mr. Burnham's letter awakened. Two of the responses were so satisfactory and conclusive in regard to the origin of the institution of criticism and so interesting in themselves, that I shall here copy them in full:

[*Letter from Rev. John A. Vinton.*]

"*Winchester, Mass., Feb.* 23, 1874.

"MR. H. W. BURNHAM:

"*My Dear Sir:*—You inquire respecting a 'secret society of missionaries.' You should have said, not 'of missionaries,' but 'of persons intending to become foreign missionaries;' for a considerable number of persons, at one time or another, were members of that society who never became missionaries. They all *intended* to be missionaries, but some were hindered by circumstances beyond their control, of whom I was one. The society was not called 'The Brothers,' but 'The Brethren.' In all such matters it is best to be *exact*.

"This society, as is often the fact, was very small in its beginnings. It was formed in the N. W. lower room of the East building of Williams College, Sept 8, 1808. It consisted of only six young men, students of that College: Gordon Hall, who graduated in 1808; Samuel John Mills, Ezra Fisk and James Richards, 1809; Luther Rice and John Seward, 1810. I have the impression that Richard Chauncey Robbins, 1809,

was also one of them; but of this I am not sure. Fisk, Seward and Robbins were prevented from going. The Constitution, names and all, were written in cipher. Great pains were taken to keep the whole affair secret, and nothing was known of it, save by its members, till long since I left Andover, which was near the end of Sept., 1831. There were reasons then for secrecy which do not exist now. The whole affair of missions to the heathen was then regarded as savoring of infatuation, as the supreme of folly. Very few thought otherwise.

"You mention Newell as one of the founders of the 'Society of Brethren.' Mr. Newell graduated at Harvard College in 1807, the year before the Society was formed. If ever a member, it was after the transfer of the society to Andover, in the winter of 1809-10.

"This society was wholly distinct from any other, as, for instance, from the Society of Inquiry, and from the Committee on Foreign Missions, at Andover, and from the American Board. It moved in a sphere of its own, silent, gentle, and unknown, but operating powerfully and producing important and lasting effects.

"The object of the society, as expressed in the Constitution, was, 'to effect, in the person of its members, a mission or missions to the heathen.'

"I look back with a sacred awe, and interest which can never cease, on my connection with the 'Society of Brethren.' Your call on me for information has struck a chord in my inmost soul. I had from my childhood—say from 1810—been deeply and tenderly interested in Foreign Missions. I had read in the old *Panoplist* the letters of the missionaries and the proceedings of the English Missionary Society. The names of Vanderkemp, Kicherer, Carey, Thomas, Marshman, and Ward, were familiar as household words. I well remember the early efforts to send missionaries from this country: the formation of the American Board. I heard the early mis-

sionaries, Hall, Nott, Judson, and Mills, preach: I read with the deepest interest the *Memoir of Harriet Newell;* I knew of the various missions as they came into existence. My mind was always, and increasingly, attentive to the subject. Being thus interested, the fact became known to others, especially at College (Dartmouth) and at the Seminary. I was active in the Society of Inquiry, and in every way then open to me.

"At length, on the evening of Feb. 2, 1810, being then a member of the Middle Class in the Theological Seminary, Andover, I was invited to a room occupied by a friend in the Seminary. I found myself in the presence of perhaps six or eight students, well known to me as ardent friends of missions. The question was then and there put to me, in a form in which I had never heard it before, 'Are you willing to go on a Foreign Mission?' I was at first startled, and asked a little time to consider and pray over it, before returning an answer.

"Two or three days afterward I devoted a day to secret fasting and prayer; laying aside all my studies, and all worldly thoughts as far as possible, and endeavoring to look to God with full purpose and singleness of heart: and I can truly say, through the grace of God given unto me, that it was a precious, profitable day to me. [Diary.] Then follows a full account of the confessions and supplications made that day.

"I consulted Dr. Woods, Dr. Tyler, and others who knew me best, and the result was a full devotion of myself to the work of a foreign missionary—a determination which I have never since regretted. I soon gave my answer to 'The Brethren' to this effect, and was admitted a member of their body, after a solemn promise to 'keep secret the existence of this society.'

"I attended their meetings and took part in all of their efforts: I suppose I know as much about that society as any man living. We did what we could to promote a spirit of

missions, not only in the Seminary, but wherever there was opportunity elsewhere, attending monthly concerts, etc.

"I can truly say no part of my life was more happily spent, and no part affords me more pleasure in the retrospect now, after the lapse of more than forty years. I was brought near to God and to Heaven, and I now deeply lament that my purpose of making known Christ to the heathen was defeated by circumstances beyond my control.

"'The Brethren' had one practice which I have never known to exist elsewhere. Every member, when his turn came, was expected to submit to a thorough criticism of his character and prevailing habits. I do not remember how often this matter was attended to, nor do I remember how often we met. As there were so many other meetings, class meetings, meetings of the Rhetorical Society, of the Society of Inquiry, etc., I think we did not meet oftener than *once a month;* but I am not sure. But I am sure of this, viz., that during the twenty months that I was a member of the society of 'Brethren,' my turn to be criticised in the manner just referred to occurred only *once;* and believe me, once was enough for a life-time. Such an operation I never went through before or since. I have before me at this moment the remarks then made on my manner and way of doing things, in prayer, in conversation, etc. The process was severe and scathing in the extreme. Most of the remarks were just and kindly intended: some of them were, I have always thought, unkind, unjust, and rather *too severe* at least. At the same time, as I wrote in my journal, I was conscious of other faults, more heinous and more dangerous to my soul and to the cause of Christ, as committed more directly against God.

"The immediate result was to drive me to the blood of sprinkling, the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. After I went to my room I could but weep before God over my numerous faults they faithfully exposed.

"Among those who took part in this process were Schauffler, now of Constantinople, Lyman, now in Hawaii, Munson, and Lyman, the martyr missionaries of Sumatra, and nine or ten others. Respectfully yours, JOHN A. VINTON."

[*Letter from William Arms, D. D.*]

"DUQUOIN, ILL., Feb. 25, 1874.

"H. W. BURNHAM:—

"*Dear Sir:*—Yours of the 19th inst. is at hand. Not knowing your object fully, and not knowing whether the ban of secrecy is removed from the society to which you refer, I may not give the exact items you wish; but I will do the best I can. It is evident that you are not a member of the society, nor do you know its name, and for the above reasons I shall not at present give you the latter.

"There was a society formed at Williams College originally by Mills, Hall, and Richards, and joined afterward by Newell, Nott, and Judson in 1808, who held their weekly meetings on the 'banks of the Hoosac by the haystack,' for the purpose of prayer and consultation on the subject of Foreign Missions, the object of which was, as expressed in its Constitution, 'to form in the person of its members a mission or missions to the heathen.' Their minutes were for a time kept in cipher, but after a while they were written in full. In the spring of 1810 Mills took this society with him to Andover, where he and his associates immediately took measures which resulted in the organization of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In 1831–32–33 it still existed at Andover, and had branches in many of the colleges in New England, and in Auburn and Princeton Theological Seminaries. At that time it counted in its list of members all the secretaries of the Board, nearly all the missionaries in the field, gentlemen and ladies, and all the students at Andover who were known to contemplate the work

of missions as a personal concern. And though their existence as a society was unknown, they had a controlling influence in the seminary. The president of the Society of Inquiry was always a member of that circle. They had their weekly meetings for prayer and consultation. At these meetings they did discuss the characters of one another, all in kindness and love, but sometimes they did rake us pretty hard. It was here that all their plans were discussed and adopted. It was here that the American Board of Foreign Missions had its origin; and it was here, too, that many of our benevolent societies had their inception and plan of arrangement laid. Among these I would name the American Board for Foreign Missions, the American Bible Society, the United Foreign Mission Society, the African School Society, the American Tract Society, the American Temperance Society, and I believe one or two others. It was at one of these meetings that Bro. Henry Lyman proposed that he should turn Baptist, giving as a reason that the Baptist Society were in greater need of missionaries than the Congregationalists. I mention this as a specimen.

"How long the society continued in operation I know not, but I know that it lived long enough to have its influence felt to the remotest corner of this ruined world. It was in the meetings of that sacred conclave that I spent some of the happiest, and I might say some of the most profitable hours of my life.

"You will see in Choules' and Smith's *Origin and History of Missions*, in Vol. II, p. 234, an article that will give some light on the subject, and if I can add any thing to aid you in your enterprise, let me know it. Probably long ere this the secrecy has been removed from the society, and something more might be said, though not a great deal.

"Respectfully yours, WILLIAM ARMS."

Thus it is shown that the institution of Mutual Criticism belongs to Congregationalism,—was the product of

its purest devotion, its era of martyrdom. If there is any thing rational or useful in it, Congregationalists ought to have the benefit of it without borrowing or paying a royalty to the Oneida Community. All that I or the Community can claim is that we have adopted the institution and made the most of it. Perhaps our long and varied experience in testing it will sometime be worth something to the world. But the honor of the invention belongs to the missionary spirit of the Congregational Church, and I would as soon rob the grave of my mother as take credit to myself for what that church has done for me. JOHN H. NOYES.

Wallingford, Conn.

The *Congregationalist*, in commenting on this number of the *Quarterly*, says: "This article of Mr. Noyes's is one of curious historical interest and valuable significance," and establishes beyond question "that criticism after the manner now followed at Oneida was one of the exercises of 'The Brethren' at Andover."

DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUAL CRITICISM IN CONNECTION WITH THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY.

In the preceding pages we have given Congregationalism credit for the *invention of Mutual Criticism*. But it will be observed that the practice of it in that denomination was confined to a

secret society in a theological seminary, and even there was so intermittent and short-lived that many of the members were ignorant of its existence, and all memory of it at Andover was in danger of being lost. There is no evidence that it was ever carried beyond that secret society or away from Andover by any one except John H. Noyes. He kept hold of it, practiced it from time to time as opportunity offered during his theological course at New Haven and his subsequent career as a Perfectionist, and finally introduced it into the Oneida Community as a standing ordinance of family culture. There it has had a long growth, from which it is now coming forth, we trust, to be appreciated everywhere.

The preliminary organization out of which the Oneida Community grew existed several years in Putney, Vt., in the character of a church or Bible-school, rather than of a Community. This organization first adopted the practice of Mutual Criticism in 1846. The story of the first experiment is told by a member as follows:

"The little school at Putney went through a long discipleship before the system of Mutual Criticism was instituted. The process was perfectly natural. Love for the truth and love for one another had been nurtured and strengthened till it could bear any strain. We could receive criticism kindly, and give it without fear of offending, in the element of tried affection. Association had ripened acquaintance so that we knew one another's faults,

We had been fed for many years on systematic Bible studies, and had been trained like Timothy, to 'meditate on these things and give ourselves wholly to them.' We were studying the true expression of our principles in external forms, and working out salvation from selfishness by the test of circumstances. The year 1846 was known among us as *the year of revival.* There was a spring-like awakening of the affections, and a baptism of the spirit of unity which was new and supernatural. It was the precursor, as it proved, of the *spirit of judgment.* This spirit was invited by our new ordinance of Criticism, and that originated on this wise: In one of our evening meetings Mr. Noyes talked about the possible rending of the veil between us and the invisible world, admitting us to open intercourse with the Primitive Church. But were we prepared to make music with this glorious company? Our hearts might be in tune, but in beauty of expression we must be for the present extremely awkward and unpracticed. We were, in our external characters, comparatively uncivilized—rude and uncultivated in taste and manners—barbarians to the refined society of heaven. But, he said, there was one chord of sympathy between us and them, one spirit in which we could flow together now, and make music, and that was the *spirit of improvement.* That spirit animates all heaven, and no matter how immature we are, it will put us in musical sympathy with every good being in the universe. With this for a beginning, we want to increase our points of harmony, and make ourselves attractive to them by all the refinement and civilization of which we are capable; and as one measure he proposed Mutual Criticism, which is now such a pillar in our system. The plan was received with enthusiasm, and one of our most earnest members

offered himself immediately as the subject of the first experiment. The others engaged to study his character, get their impressions clear, and bring to the next meeting the verdict of their sincerest scrutiny. We were to tell our whole mind, 'without partiality and without hypocrisy,' 'in naught extenuate, nor set down aught in malice,' but hold up to him as perfect a mirror of his faults as possible. When the affair transpired, we were not prepared for its solemnity. If some of us were sportively disposed in the beginning, we were serious enough before the surgery was over. There was a spirit in our midst, which was like the word of God, 'quick and powerful, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' All that winter we felt that we were in the day of judgment. Criticism had free course, and it was like fire in the stubble of our faults. Each in turn submitted to the operation above described. It was painful in its first application, but agreeable in its results. One brother, who has a vivid memory of his sensations, says that while he was undergoing the process he felt like death, as though he were dissected with a knife; but when it was over, he felt as if he had been *washed*. He said to himself, 'These things are all true, but they are gone, they are washed away.' Criticism was our interpretation of Christ's saying to his disciples, 'If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, *ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*'"

The method pursued in these primitive criticisms is more specifically described in the following paragraph:

"Any person wishing to be criticised offered himself for this purpose at a meeting of the Association. His character then became the subject of special scrutiny by all the mem-

bers till the next meeting, when his trial took place. On the presentation of his case each member in turn was called on to specify, as far and as frankly as possible, every thing objectionable in his character and conduct. In this way the person criticised had the advantage of a many-sided mirror in viewing himself, or perhaps it may be said was placed in the focus of a spiritual lens composed of all the judgments in the Association. It very rarely happened that any complaint of injustice was made by the subject of the operation, and generally he received his chastening with fortitude, submission, and even gratitude, declaring that he felt himself relieved and purified by the process. Among the various objectionable features of the character under criticism, some one or two of the most prominent would usually elicit censure from the whole circle, and the judgment on these points would thus have the force of a unanimous verdict. Any soreness which might result from the operation was removed at the succeeding meeting by giving the patient a round of commendations. This system of open and kindly criticism (a sort of reversed substitute for tea-party backbiting in the world) became so attractive by its manifest good results that every member of the Putney Association submitted to it in the course of the winter of 1846–7; and to this may be attributed much of the accelerated improvement which marked that period of their history. Instead of offenses, abounding love and good works followed the letting loose of judgment."

These accounts both fail to mention the important rule which was adopted that the subject should receive his criticism *without replying*, unless obvious errors of fact were stated.

On the removal of the Putney family to Oneida the system of Mutual Criticism was carried with

them, and has been continued with various modifications in that Community and its branches to the present time.

For a few years past there has been a standing committee of criticism, to whom persons desiring the benefit of the ordinance might make application. This committee is selected by the Community, and is changed every three months—thus giving all an opportunity to serve as critics as well as subjects. The person volunteering is free to have others besides the committee present, or to have his critics only those of his own choice, or to invite a general expression from the whole Community.

In the great majority of cases criticism is desired and solicited by individuals, because they are certain from their own past experience, or from observation of the experience of others, that they will be benefited by it: but in some instances, where it is noticed that persons are suffering from faults or influences that might be corrected or removed by criticism, they are advised to submit themselves to it. In extreme cases of disobedience to the Community regulations, or obsession by influences adverse to the general harmony, criticism is administered by the Community or its leaders without solicitation on the part of the subject. In general, all are trained to criticise freely, and to be criticised without offense. Evil in

character or conduct is thus sure to meet with effectual rebuke from individuals, from platoons, or from the whole Community.

The Communists say in their publications:

"Our object being self-improvement, we have found by much experience that free criticism—faithful, honest, sharp criticism—is one of the best exercises for the attainment of that object. We have tried it thoroughly; and the entire body of the Community have both approved and honestly submitted themselves to it. Criticism is in fact the entrance-fee by which all the members have sought admission.

"People sometimes imagine they could not endure criticism as it is carried on in our Community—that they have not the necessary moral heroism: and they are willing to credit us with uncommon virtues, as though it were entirely supererogatory, on our part, to submit to so mortifying a process. But we think that, instead of being martyrs, we have an easy time in comparison with others; and this is the way we reason:—Criticism *will be* in proportion to the need of it; where there is demand there will be supply; faults will draw censure, and criticism will circulate and find its proper destination in society. This is a law of distribution as natural and inevitable as any that exists. People around us are subject to it as much as ourselves. The difference is, that we coöperate with this law in a way to make its operation the

most comfortable and satisfactory. We study the easiest way for supply and demand to meet. There are several different ways. Paul says, 'If we would *judge ourselves*,' which may include mutual criticism, 'we should not be judged:' he here presents one way. Then he adds, 'but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world;' which shows us two other ways: one, chastening from the Lord, and the other a severer condemnation. The necessity for judgment is universal, but it is for us to choose how we will meet it: and there is a *best* way. So far as we judge ourselves, and help one another to judgment, we shall escape present chastening by affliction and the condemnation of the final judgment. We do not get any more criticism than others, but instead of running up a long account for settlement hereafter we prefer to take it as we go along, and in the way of mutual admonition rather than by chastening from the Lord.

"The time will come when the secrets of all hearts will be made manifest. Then those who now indulge this shrinking from the light, and sensibility to exposure will have to suffer all that we suffer, and their criticism will be much more intolerable, because not graduated as it has been with us.

"It is not only true that all men will ultimately receive their due of criticism, but they do not really

get any valuable exemption from it even now. Thought is free, and it is full of criticism all through society. Every person is more or less transparent to those around him, and passes in the surrounding sphere of thought for pretty much what he is worth. Speech is free, too, in a certain way, and industri ously supplies the demand for criticism with an article commonly called backbiting. If you have faults, you may be sure they are the measure of the evil-thinking and evil-speaking there is going on about you. Supply meets demand, but not in a way to tell to your account under the common system of distribution. Criticism is not more free with us, but it is distributed more profitably. We have a systematic plan of distribution, by which the true article is insured; and it is delivered in the right time and place. Criticism, as it goes in society, is without method; there is no 'science in it;' it acts every-where like the electric fluid, but is not applied to any useful purpose; it distributes *itself*, and sometimes injuriously. In the Community we draw it off from the mischievous channels of evil-thinking and scandal, and conduct it through plain speech to a beneficial result.

"Self-accusation is one method of supply in the line of criticism, that spiritual persons are very apt to run into, when they lack the proper supply from discriminating friends. The fear of criticism from others is often accompanied with the most torment-

ing self-inspection. Persons often suffer with false imaginations respecting the feelings of others toward them, thinking themselves the subject of criticism when they are not. Then, finally, the great 'accuser' is ready to enter at any opening, and stock the market with his poisonous stuff. He speculates on faults, making persons take his spirit of condemnation if possible. The operation of systematic mutual criticism is to displace all these irregular, hurtful forms of fault-finding. Self-accusation is suppressed, false imaginations dispelled, and the 'accuser of the brethren' cast down. Justification and a spirit of improvement take their place.

"We simply adopt the policy of 'home manufacture.' Assuming the principle that there will be just so much criticism stirring, either domestic or imported, we think it is the better way to keep a supply of our own manufacture, and prohibit the foreign article. If there are folly and faults at work there will be a corresponding amount of criticism: and, if we do not produce it at home, supply and demand will meet in some other way less comfortable. We make a business, therefore, of supplying ourselves, and find that we can manufacture a better article and have it at less cost.

"It is an object in criticism not to irritate by constant fault-finding, but to present to each one from time to time, as in a mirror, the *tout ensemble*,

the whole of his character, as it is seen by those around him—the aim being, not only to point out the way of specific improvement, but also to produce humility and softness of heart, in which all good things grow and all bad things die."

THEORETICAL VIEW.

THE general meaning of the word Criticism is obvious, being derived from the Greek *krino*, signifying to discriminate—to separate—to judge. It is properly applied to the process of inspection by which persons form their opinion of works in art, literature, science, morality, and religion. It is an application of the judgment and taste to these things in such a way as to distinguish between the good and the bad—to separate mixtures, and bring things to their simple elements, so that praise and blame, like and dislike, may be intelligently distributed. Hence criticism may be called with some propriety the chemistry of mental and spiritual forms—doing for the higher spheres of being something like what the crucible and testing apparatus do for gross matter.

Such is a general definition of the term *Criticism*. Traced out in its more specific application

to different subjects, as to the fine arts, to literature, etc., we find that many different faculties are employed in its operation, and that the tests of approval and disapproval vary with the varying subjects. In music, criticism employs, as its agent, the *ear*, and requires that the performance shall pass the approval of certain principles of acoustic taste. In painting or sculpture, the *eye* is principally the medium of criticism, while the senses of form, color, and ideal beauty sit in judgment. In literature, there are still other faculties, as the love of truth, the imagination, etc., that are involuntarily summoned to the business of criticism whenever we read a book.

In respect to all these departments criticism is quite a natural operation of the mind, and is carried on continually as we come in contact with the objects of it, with more or less effect, according to our intelligence and purpose. Whenever we have a feeling of pleasure at the sight of a beautiful object, or at hearing fine music, there is the essence and beginning of criticism. We have only to trace out and tell the *reason* of our pleasure, or of the opposite sensation in case that is produced, to make the act of criticism complete.

With this view of the subject in its ordinary aspect, the reader will readily understand the explanation which we shall now give of SOCIAL or MUTUAL CRITICISM. Observe, then, that the faculty

of careful discrimination and correct judgment, which in ordinary circles is exercised mainly in the criticism of literature and art, in the circle of Mutual Criticism is turned to the discovery of personal character. We carry up the art and the uses of criticism from the range of things to that of human beings. What the *connoisseur* and the reviewer do in respect to books and paintings we do in respect to ourselves and one another.

It is evident that an immensely wider and richer field of scrutiny is offered in the case of living character, with all its various phases and relations, than in the case of lifeless objects like paintings or books. A person presents himself to us in a many-sided, complex way, not as an object of sight and sound merely, but as a spiritual, intellectual, physical and social being, with whom we hold perpetual and often intimate relations. How appropriate, then, it is that he should be the subject of criticism—that we should note and study that in him which tends to give us pleasure, and should observe, on the other hand, those things which are inharmonious and disagreeable.

While the criticism of character employs most (if not all) of the faculties which are engaged in the criticism of other things, it also brings into exercise a still higher part of our nature—the faculty of spiritual perception. As mere living beings we possess in ourselves, and present to others, all the

essential beauties of music, poetry, painting, sculpture, and romance, on which to exercise the discrimination of taste; and still beyond this there are the harmonies of spiritual life, which are understood only in the clairvoyance and fellowship of spirits.

Mutual Criticism, it will be seen, is an organized system of judgment and truth telling which gives voice and power to the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Selfishness and disorder inevitably annoy the circle around them, and the circle thus annoyed has, in the institution of Mutual Criticism, a regular and peaceable method of bringing the truth to bear upon the offender—a method much more likely to cure the evil than ill-timed and acrimonious complaints of aggrieved individuals.

It is important that persons or circles attempting criticism should get a true, comprehensive ideal of its nature and spirit. Experience shows that unpracticed critics are liable to fall into narrow views on the right hand and on the left. Some persons seem to considef criticism merely a keen and sharp delineation of faults, without any reference to corresponding virtues. Others make it consist in indiscriminate praise, passing over defects so lightly that they are lost sight of in view of the virtues. Others again seize on the external

manifestations of character, and skim its surface without diving into its recesses. The first of these methods is an index of a *censorious* spirit: the second of a *flattering* spirit: and the third of a *superficial* spirit. True criticism avoids them all. It studies character as a painter would a picture, exploring and analyzing the whole. It refers actions back to their hidden spring—traces excesses to some virtue which is overstrained—points out the deficiencies which indicate the want of union with life of an opposite nature—is hearty, yet temperate in awarding praise and blame, and leaves its subject neither flattered nor despairing, but earnest and hopeful.

Phrenology concerns itself about the discovery of human character, and as popularly practiced is in many respects analogous to the system of Mutual Criticism. It professes to give men, as in a mirror, a view of themselves in all their failings and their excellencies. It has elaborated a set of names for the various manifestations of human nature, and its technical language based on those names may be used with advantage in the exercise of Mutual Criticism. In fact Phrenology, which has been justly called "metaphysics for the million," has accustomed large classes of ordinary minds to processes of reflection on character which have prepared the way for the more thorough work of judgment, to be supplied by Mutual Criticism.

The difference between Phrenology and Mutual Criticism is in their different methods of discovery and their different machinery of application.

Phrenology makes its discoveries of character by observation of the cranium: Mutual Criticism discovers character by observation of actual conduct.

Phrenological discoveries are made and applied in each case by a single manipulator or judge. Mutual Criticism avails itself of the observations and applying skill of a jury consisting of the subject's circle of acquaintances.

It is obvious that Mutual Criticism may always avail itself of the assistance of Phrenology so far as observation of the cranium is found to be helpful to observation of actual conduct.

Mutual Criticism undoubtedly is a product of Christianity. Its history goes back beyond the missionary and martyr age of Congregationalism to the missionary and martyr age of the Christian church. Its form is a modern invention, but its spirit is discernible every-where in the New Testament. When Paul says to the Romans, "I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, *able also to admonish one another*," he attests the substantial presence of Mutual Criticism in that church.

With this view we shall freely go to the New Testament for help in our endeavor to represent the spirit and working of Mutual Criticism. It

was born and has been, thus far, brought up among Bible-loving believers, and we doubt whether it will ever have much popularity or success beyond that circle, or in any circle that has not the missionary and martyr spirit of Christ.

HOW TO GIVE CRITICISM.

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend." *Proverbs* 27: 6.

As pure oxygen is destructive, but oxygen combined with nitrogen is the very breath of life, so criticism must be combined with love to be wholesome and healing. Or we may compare criticism to machinery which needs to be carefully oiled in order to be safe. Without the lubrication of love, criticism works more mischief and distress than it does good. Society should be *knit together* in love before the strain of criticism is put on.

As individuals, we must love before we criticise. Christ was qualified to be the *judge* of this world, by the love he showed in laying down his life for it. Criticism bathed in love wounds but to heal. Bathed in personal feelings it leaves in the wound poison. There is great sensibility in most persons to criticism. The nerves of egotism are wonderfully delicate, and cringe at the slightest touch;

and it requires wisdom to criticise faithfully, and yet avoid unnecessary irritation.

There must not only be love, but *respect*—such a recognition of the divine birthright of man as will make us fear to be oppressive or lord it over any one. Whatever a person's faults are, if he is a believer Christ is in him: and there is a sense in which it may be said, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?" Criticism should carry no savor of condemnation. There should be discrimination between the spirit that is on a person, or his superficial character, and his heart, where Christ is. The object of criticism is only to destroy the husk, which conceals his inward goodness.

A third qualification is sincerity, or simplicity which comes right to the point without too much "going round." The plainest course gives most satisfaction to all parties.

Our hearts should be in a soft, genial state toward those we criticise, and at the same time we should be sincere and tell the plain truth without fear of offending. Sometimes persons criticise in a superficial way, carefully mixing so much praise and extenuation with their blame as not to seriously disturb self-complacency. This is ineffective, and is done with an eye to favor and not to pleasing the Truth. An overbearing spirit in criticism is

equally ineffective. *Patience* is an important qualification in a critic. We are instructed to "exhort, reprove, rebuke, *with all long suffering* and doctrine." *Love* should be established between the parties—fervent charity which thinketh no evil, and yet is wide-awake where there is any chance to help another improve. Again, "If a brother be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of *meekness*." Meekness is the spirit in which we want persons to receive criticism: and we must give it in the same spirit that it is desirable to provoke on the other side. Combativeness will provoke resistance: a censorious spirit will provoke retaliation: a proud spirit will provoke self-justification, and so on.

These gentle qualities of patience, meekness and charity, do not exclude a just indignation against wrong. Vehemence of spirit and a godly anger are often necessary to give execution to the shaft of criticism. Paul instructs Titus to rebuke the obtuseness of the Cretians, "*sharply*."

Wisdom as to the time and circumstances is necessary. In some cases private criticism is preferable: in others open rebuke "before all." In general it is best to wait until criticism is cordially invited. Constant chafing against a person's faults is unprofitable: it produces either indifference or fear in the persons, and is injurious to our own health of spirit. Sometimes people criticise those

around them merely or chiefly because they are personally annoyed by the faults they complain of; but the true motive is to edify the body of Christ.

We should not let evil around us *compel* us to criticise it, and so do it reluctantly, or in moments of excitement; but should do the work freely, and of our own choice, in a calm, believing spirit.

The feeling is very natural that we have no right to criticise an evil that we see in others unless we are free from it ourselves; and even when unrestricted criticism is invited there is sometimes a holding back on this account. But this is wrong. No such feeling should hinder a person from being honest. If he sees something to criticise in another, the consciousness of having the same infirmity is no reason why he should not speak the truth.

Then, reciprocally, a person should not throw off criticism because the individual who gives it may also be faulty on the same point. If an evil is in us, no matter how many others have the same evil, we are bound to be saved from it, and we should avail ourselves of all the truth that can be said about it. Let every one stand by himself; let there be no answering again—no saying, "This is as applicable to some one else as to me, and therefore I will not receive it." When others are criticised speak freely and earnestly, without any self-reference. Look simply at the evil under criticism and demolish it.

What we should aim at is to let the spirit of Truth have fair play. Surely the spirit of Truth may lead us to criticise others when we are not entirely free from the faults that we criticise. If we are troubled with any particular infirmity, that may be a reason why we should show it no favor in others, but stimulate ourselves to sharp criticism of it wherever we find it. In that way we may help ourselves to get rid of it. We need not admit the idea for a moment that it is hypocrisy to criticise others for faults that we have ourselves. The truth of a criticism does not necessarily imply that the critic is faultless. The truth is not at all dependent on our personal position in reference to it. Let every one assume that he is on the side of the spirit of Truth, and determine to give it all the facilities he can.

It is plain, if I have a mote in my eye, and you have one in yours, that I can see to get yours out better than I can to get out my own, and *vice versa*. Each can help the other. To have a *beam* in my eye is another thing. If I have a great thing in my eye that stops my sight altogether, I must first pull that out, before I can see to cast the mote out of my brother's eye. When persons are in total darkness they are not in a condition to criticise. But this is not to be assumed at all respecting those who have accepted Christ. The light is shining in their hearts, and mutual criticism is

taking the advantage of each other's sight to pull out motes. Criticism should not be considered a personal matter, but a general operation to help one another. Simply let the truth have free course.

We may criticise faithfully and severely, and yet not *effectually*—not so as to "tell"—for want of wisdom to hit the center of the fault. We must discriminate in the *manner* of criticism in different cases. In the case of a person who is not really in a progressive state—who has no genuine ambition for improvement—with a view to get him in motion, wake him up, and start him on the track, it may be good to say the worst that can be said, and make his faults as odious as the truth will bear, so that he will hate himself if possible. But when a person has a genuine eagerness for improvement, and what he wants is, not to be put in motion, but to be shown where to move, criticism properly takes a different form. A person in that state, wide awake and sincere in general, does not need very much to be told what his deficiencies are; he is as likely to know them as any one, and perhaps more so. Your way to help him is not to urge him to vain endeavors and impossible attempts by a flood of aimless criticism, but if possible to show him the next step in faith that is before him—the very thing that he can do to improve, without any impossible heroism. Where a person knows his own deficiencies, and is determined to improve in

every respect as fast as he can, he does not want the discovery of many faults so much as a clear discovery of *the* fault that it is in order for him to attend to now, and specific instruction what to do. If you have wisdom to show him some simple step that he can take in reference to the fault which next demands attention, you will do him more good than by ever so much general animadversion upon his character.

So far as the detection and criticism of evil is subservient to charity it is good: but if we contemplate evil with personal feelings, and with the spirit of bitter censure, we add evil to evil—we torment ourselves, and cause the offense to abound so far as our spirit of condemnation works in the accused.

Let it always be remembered that the object of criticism is not that the critics may unload themselves of grudges, but to help the person criticised —to tell him the truth in a good spirit—to improve his religions experience—to bring him nearer to God—to give him a new enjoyment of life.

It is one sign that we have given criticism in a right spirit, if we feel good-natured toward the person afterwards, and it does not disturb the social flow between us.

HOW TO RECEIVE CRITICISM.

The difference between a right and wrong spirit in receiving criticism, is the difference between manliness and childishness. A childish spirit frustrates the power and operation of truth in two ways · in one form it meets criticism with indifference, carelessness, sluggishness; it hears and forgets; it is not really pricked to the heart and stirred to manly action. Another almost opposite manifestation of childishness toward criticism, is a spirit which is too sensitive, too anxious for justification and in too much hurry for the results of the discipline. This spirit will break forth in anguish on the one hand, and rush into hurried action on the other; showing that its eye is on escape from suffering—on keeping a comfortable state of feeling rather than on improvement. A manly lover of criticism will not only take pleasure in the accomplishment of a good change in himself, but in the process by which it is accomplished. He will not only love the meat, but love to crack the nut. If we have an eye to the result alone, the process will be disagreeable to us. The man who paints a picture for the money to come for it merely, is no true artist. If he has any genuine taste he enjoys his work as well as its result. So in respect to criticism; the right spirit takes a quiet satisfaction in

seeing the truth working out its process of improvement, and is not impatient for the fruit of it. In the childish spirit, a hopeful person will become excited and impatient, and set himself to bustling about in a way that does not accomplish any thing; while a person who is naturally despondent will be driven to despair and discouragement.

Suppose you are set to thread a needle: if you are all in a bustle, or if your eyes are full of tears, you cannot do it. You will do it only by being cool and quietly in earnest, and having your eyes clear. The operation of submitting ourselves to spiritual criticism so as to make it effectual, is like threading a needle; it cannot be done either in the agitation of hope or fear. The more trouble we are in, or the more difficult the thing to be done, the more need there is of a calm, patient, self-possessed spirit; *i. e.*, a manly spirit, free from childishness.

Different organizations show their peculiarities in their manner of receiving criticism. No two persons are affected exactly alike. Temperaments have their influence, and particularly the predominance or deficiency of hope, conscientiousness, and self-esteem. Approbativeness manifests itself in sensitiveness to blame, and a care to put the best side out. Large self-esteem makes persons resist criticism as a false charge; it cannot bear the mortification of being found in the wrong, and

hence is very liable to deceive itself: it is apt to take criticism as a personal attack. Large hope seems to foil criticism. It may be compared to soil that is too rich; which is just as unproductive as soil that has never been fertilized. Small hope and small self-esteem make a soil that is too damp—it wants the sun. Some temperaments make a soil that is too quick; its productions shoot up rapidly, but they are not strong-rooted and hardy. This soil wants the manure of *patience*, and needs to be plowed in deep furrows. Some soils are soft and deep, and need only the touch of the harrow; the seed planted in them, will take care of itself. The best soil is sunny, genial, deep, well exposed to the light and warmth of heaven, receptive to the dew and rain. A spirit that is constantly replenished with the strengthening and quickening elements of patience and enthusiasm for improvement, is the best for criticism.

In receiving criticism we may stand and take it as the fire of an enemy, and so feel wounded and sore; or we may go over and join the party that fires at us, in which case we shall feel unhurt. Let a person have the self-possession to take sides with the truth and help on any just criticism of himself and he will find he can endure the severest exposure of his faults without losing any of his self-respect or buoyancy of spirit. What self-respect he might lose by the discovery of his faults, is

more than made up by the consciousness of being truthful; and by the justification which fellowship with the Spirit of Truth always brings. There is nothing more exhilarating than that electric union between our spirits and the Spirit of Truth, which is brought about by a courageous sacrifice of self to the truth. We enter into the joy of that Spirit, and into its self-complacency, in spite of the mortification we may superficially suffer. If we are members of Christ—one with his righteous, glorious life at the center—criticism does not touch the real *I*. It takes effect on only the external character, and that we can bear to have washed, as we do our clothes, without feeling ashamed or in any way damaged. The great secret of going through the judgment comfortably is to help judge ourselves.

A manly purpose of improvement is calm and rational, and will nurse itself for years to accomplish a desired change. The Bible speaks of men who "lie in wait to deceive," but we must "lie in wait" for the truth. Look at the cat lying in wait for the mouse. She is still; not a muscle stirs; but her eyes are shining with a bright, keen flame; and that flame indicates her purpose, while her stillness indicates her patience. There is nothing that pleases God more than to see us lie in wait for improvement with a bright eye, and without flurry. However far we may be from what he wishes us to be, if there is this purpose in us he is pleased with

us. The hunter has glorious sport in running down the game as well as in overtaking it. A manly purpose will give us the same excitement and pleasure in the pursuit of self-improvement.

God waits for our improvement with long-suffering and patience: it is impolite and unkind for us to trouble him with our impatience when he is not impatient. The spirit that seeks improvement with reference to the enjoyment of the immediate result, is the essence of pleasure-seeking. When pleasure-seeking is cornered up, its last resort is to turn round and want to make improvement at a jump. Some persons fret to get a meek and quiet spirit. When we are under criticism the evil spirit is uneasy because he finds he must go out of us; and he makes us uneasy because we cannot jump instantaneously to a perfect correction of our faults.

To illustrate the difference between the childish and the manly spirit in receiving criticism: suppose we should suggest to a company of children or childish persons to build a house. We can imagine that some of them would think in a crude, presumptuous way, that they could easily do it, and begin immediately to fly round, all hurry and bustle, expecting to perform the job in a very short time. Others would look upon the undertaking as so monstrous that they never could hope to do it, and so would refuse to try. But a sensible man would lay his plans, gather his materials, and go

about the job with an unwavering purpose, coolly expecting that it would take him months and perhaps years, to finish it. The great works of architecture and engineering may justly inspire our reverence, as exponents of manly purpose stretching through years, cool and self-sustained. We must learn from them to form immortal, self-sustaining purposes of personal improvement that do not depend on immediate fruitfulness; and then we shall love the criticism that helps us on in our work.

Observe that the idea of "lying in wait" is not on the one hand that of doing nothing, nor on the other, of bustling about; but it is to *watch*. Christ and Paul both said a great deal about watching. The faculty of watching with fire in the eye, is the great secret of power. It requires a perfect balance of spirit between eagerness and self-control. With that balance, criticism may not merely be endured, but welcomed as a positive pleasure.

After all this general and desultory advice to criticisers and criticisees, most persons probably will have some anxious doubts whether mutual criticism can be carried on without offenses and wrangling. Personal grudges and unjust mistakes are so apt to steal into the observations of those who criticise, and personal irritability under such grudges and mistakes, and even under kind and

just censure, is so natural to those who are criticised, that it seems a great thing to expect ordinary human nature to go through the ordeal without "answering back," and so turning the criticism club into a debating society, and finally into a bear-garden. Undoubtedly this is the danger that stands in the way of Mutual Criticism.

And it must here be distinctly admitted that the successful introduction of this institution does require a certain amount of intelligence and civilization of the passions. The same is true, as every body knows, of all free institutions, such as common suffrage and trial by jury. The stupid and barbarous cannot run such machinery with profit and safety. And Mutual Criticism undoubtedly will require even a higher standard of civilization than that in which these common institutions are possible.

We judge, however, that a large part of the civilized world is far enough advanced to handle the new machinery which we offer. There was civilization enough at Andover to invent it and run it profitably forty-five years ago; and it has been in successful operation at Putney and Oneida for thirty years. Things are not generally invented and perfected long before the world is ready to use them.

Our advice to all societies, churches, Communities and clubs that think of starting Mutual Criti-

cism is, to first sit down and count the cost, and to take our word for it that the cost will be nothing less than general humility enough to receive severe mortification and even unjust criticisms without reply and without offense.

For a good example of the right spirit in receiving criticism, we are glad to be able to point back to Rev. John A. Vinton, one of the Andover veterans whose testimony was published in the first of these chapters. He says of his ordeal, "The process was severe and scathing in the extreme. Most of the remarks were just and kindly intended; some of them were, I have always thought, unkind, unjust, and rather too severe, at least. At the same time, as I wrote in my journal, I was conscious of other faults more heinous, and more dangerous to my soul and the cause of Christ, as committed more directly against God. The immediate result was to drive me to the blood of sprinkling, the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. After I went to my room I could but weep before God over my numerous faults, which had been so faithfully exposed." That is the way to take criticism, and it is easy when you know how and have the soft heart. If you cannot calculate on something like that in your circle, do not undertake Mutual Criticism.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

HAVING presented in previous chapters the history and theory of Mutual Criticism, with instructions for giving and receiving its discipline, we proceed now to lay before the reader some examples of its actual practice, selected from books of reports which have been kept at the Oneida Community for many years:

Criticism of Mr. B.

BY A SMALL COMMITTEE.

Critic No. 1.—B.'s earnestness and strength of character make him a very valuable member of society; but he needs cultivation and refinement.

Critic No. 2.—Mr. B. has all the solid qualities—firmness, uprightness and sincerity; he intends to deal justly with every one.

Critic No. 3.—He is warm-hearted, and a man of tender, delicate sensibilities. I think he is governed by the Spirit of Truth more than most men; but his mind and manners do not fairly represent his heart.

Critic No. 4.—He is an unselfish man; free from envy and jealousy. He needs outward refinement. The inward beauty of his character is working out, and will eventually overcome all external defects.

Critic No. 5.—He is a philosopher—a man who thinks and reasons deeply; but he lacks simplicity in the expression of his thoughts.

Critic No. 6.—The interior of his character is excellent; but the exterior is faulty. In order to do him the good we wish to by this exercise, a severe criticism

ought to be aimed at his faults. I do not believe in neglecting criticisms of the external character because the internal is good. I should advise him, instead of being contented with inward beauty, to think it of a great deal of importance to have a beautiful manifestation of it. We know that, except at times when his spirit is unusually free, his utterance is labored, tedious and awkward. He is aware of all this, and I hope he will not account it a small affair, but determine to qualify himself unto all pleasing, and not limit his ambition to being merely a good man. At present he does not do justice to himself. I believe he has in him the soul of music—he feels the glorious emotions of which music is an expression; but he is no singer. Again, in regard to his business character, he has the reputation of perfect honesty; but there is a lack of science and tact in his business transactions which have brought him into many difficulties.

Critic No. 1.—He has large hope, and often promises more than he fulfills; disappoints folks. I think his business habits are quite bad—his financial accounts are always at "loose ends." He needs to carry his conscientiousness into business affairs.

Critic No. 7.—It is true that he does not fulfill his promises. He is what I should call an outline character; he makes excellent plans, but is careless in executing details.

Critic No. 8.—He is not as neat in his personal habits as good taste requires; he needs to pay more attention to outward adornment.

Critic No. 6.—The principle of polishing the outside is the principle of democracy. I am in favor of free

democratic principles in regard to the different faculties of our nature. Every member of our personalities has its rights; the external senses have their rights as well as the mind; and because they are subordinate in the body politic, are they to be trampled under foot? Let us carry out democracy and assert that all the senses and susceptibilities, even those most inferior, have their rights, and show them a wise and generous attention. We should not devote all the wealth that God has given us to a certain part of our nature, but let every part have its rights.

Criticism of F.

SUMMARY REPORT.

F. is a young man of good promise. One feels confidence in his purpose to serve God. When under the sway of appetite or passion he may appear selfish; still one can always rely upon the warmth and generosity of his heart.

His generic faults—those which include all others—are *superficiality and love of excitement*. He contents himself with what he can see at a glance and with what he can do at a stroke. He is smart—has a good deal of what may be called genius—still he has not yet shown much talent for patient, persistent labor. The plodders outstrip him. He has a good mind, but he does not read enough to stock it; does not study and reflect enough to strengthen it. He skims things. The cream of most things lies at the bottom. His talent excites expectations of noble achievement; but he does not satisfy you, because he lets his fields lie fallow.

He generally seems ill at ease—never is quite con-

tented with the thing in hand, but is always reaching forward for something else. He seldom sits long at a time, but is given to roving—to "rushing about," as he terms it. If the rush of events is not rapid enough, then he rushes after events. His love of excitement is thought to very much govern his relations to the truth. He has a curiosity about the truth, but not love enough for it. He does not study and plod for the truth in a simple love for it. If he attends to the truth there must be some excitement about it. Excitement-seeking, if not exactly disobedience, is certainly very far from waiting on the Lord. He should thoroughly study the subject of repose of character.

F. is much more gentle and lovable than a first glance at his manners would lead one to think. One says of him that he is not quiet and reflective enough to be first-rate company. Then, too, he is inquisitive, and much given to peeping and prying. People naturally dislike to be the subjects of curious scrutiny. It is thought he could improve in refinement.

He suffers from loss of self-respect. The tendency of this has been to lead him into descending fellowship. The Committee would exhort him to take no counsel from condemnation. If a man loses self-respect he is exposed to all manner of wicked spirits. F. should persevere and struggle with all his might to keep his self-respect. He should be much in earnest to secure the help of God. Of late he has grown manly and sober. Many of his old faults have disappeared, and there are good reports of his quiet industry. He has had experiences in the overcoming faith that are bright and very encouraging.

Criticism of A.

HARMONY IN CONVERSATION.

D.—A. is very impetuous and positive in his manner, and is deficient in persuasiveness. He takes a position that you are not prepared for, and announces it with such flat assurance that it gives you a *jolt*. He has a kind of honesty that strips every thing of romance, and this is apt to revolt you. He will bring out a statement quite contrary to what you suppose to be the fact, without any circumlocution whatever, and though you are not sure but that he is correct, you naturally resist being *jerked* into the admission of it. He might have the same independence and honesty, with more plausibility and tact.

E.—The prevailing trait in A.'s character, amounting almost to idiosyncrasy, is *directness*. He is *direct* in every thing he does—direct in his religious pursuits, as evinced by the straight-forward simplicity of his testimony—direct in his thoughts, his speech and his actions. This is in general a good quality in persons, giving intensity to all their operations, singleness of eye and consequent success. But in our social intercourse, this trait needs some modification. It will not do in conversation to drive point-blank at a topic, and think of nothing else. There are many side-considerations, growing out of our personal relations and the demands of social harmony, which it is necessary to have in view to make intercourse agreeable. A.'s excessive directness sometimes causes him to overlook and forget every thing but his subject, and leads him into unnecessary discord.

A.—Before I came to the Community I was fond of debate, and had the habit of not caring whether what I

was said pleasing or not—if it was incontrovertible, that was enough.

D.—That rule will do for the rough-and-tumble of life abroad, but it will not do here, where the very object of our association is harmony. For us, such exhortations as these, are the rule—"Endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit"—"Mind the same things"—"Be of one heart and of one mind"—"Forbear one another"—"Let every one of us please his neighbor." And we need not think that faithful pursuit of the truth will lead us away from our object of unity: if we faithfully pursue the truth, we shall faithfully seek unity—and unity not only of heart, but of mind and manners. The truthful spirit will educate us "unto all pleasing." If A. would make it more of an object to think and speak harmoniously with others, his independence and impetuosity would regulate itself without any injury to his honesty. Suppose that he forms an opinion which he wants to express, and at the same time he is wide awake for harmony, and has reason to think that what he is going to say will not fall into C.'s mind pleasantly; in such a case true consideration requires, not that he should suppress his opinion, or that he should agree with C., but that he should broach his opinion moderately—make some stairs for C. to descend on, and not drop him right down with a jolt. All our speech should be surrounded with the most delicate reference to harmony. With a quick ear for harmony, and a heart that values it as God does, A. might be just as independent as he is now, and yet always find a way to express himself musically.

The generic fault with A. is that he is too *masculine*. He would be a better man if he were a little more of a

woman: *i. e.*, if his life instead of running so much into strength, ran more into delicacy, affection, amiability—qualities which peculiarly belong to the feminine nature.

Criticism of Mrs. C.

DOING AND BEING.

It is natural for Mrs. C. to make more account of *doing* than *being*—to serve God more with her hands than her heart. We are all learning that nothing we have done or can do commends us to God; only the fragrance of our spirits pleases him. Good actions reflect back upon the heart, and improve the quality of our *being;* and that is their chief value.

Those who have the natural faculty of *usefulness*, and a good deal of method and natural decorum, are apt to be self-righteous and censorious toward those whose value consists more in their social qualities. The power of making society lively and musical, or of refreshing others by a sweet, gentle spirit, is often worth more than a great deal of industry with the hands. It is the temptation of the *doing* natures to feel like the brother of the prodigal, as if they deserved *the most*, and did not receive *so much* as some of their Father's children; forgetting that God is better pleased with the unclaiming, child-like, meek spirit of those who know they have merited nothing by their works—who love most, because they have had most forgiven. Our spirit is that part of us which touches God, and ministers to his pleasure, and attracts his fellowship. If Mrs. C. would learn to appreciate character by this standard, and cultivate in herself the ornaments of the social nature, love, taste, sprightliness, etc., it would improve her

very much. She has an excellent mind, and strong ambition to overcome the defects in her character. God has a fair chance to work in her—the soil will bear a great deal. She has that spirit of faithfulness and persevering zeal, which characterizes the company of believers to which she belonged—a spirit which puts us entirely at rest about their ever failing or making troublesome delay on account of tribulation. God will honor this spirit, and this faith.

Criticism of R.

NARROW-MINDEDNESS.

R. is honest, and has a sincere ambition to be a right kind of character. He is very reliable and faithful in work, free and unselfish, so far as the disposition of his time and muscles are concerned. He is not a fault-finder or pleasure-seeker. The Community has perfect confidence in his general purpose and central union with Christ. Still he is in difficulty—his experience is unsatisfactory—he does not find himself in the current of inspiration.

The trouble is, he is *narrow-minded*. He has lived without a proper appreciation of the cultivation of the intellect; thinking it had nothing to do with his spiritual character, or his fellowship with Christ. In the absence of other subjects of interest, his own *individual experience* occupies all his thoughts. He is intensely introspective; his thoughts circle round a center within himself—he does not find his way inward to the Kingdom of Heaven.

He has a very strong desire for the ascending fellowship, for the society of his superiors; and has battled

with impediments a long time, but not in the right way. His manner of working has only condensed his egotism, and removed him farther from his object. It is a clear truth that we must *go out of ourselves* to find fellowship—we must meet in the medium of a third element—we must each be attracted to the same thing. But R. can not expect others to be attracted to the center around which his thoughts revolve—every one must be willing to forsake his own center to find unity.

In communication with some persons, you feel that the strength of their egotism would compel you into unwilling sympathy, and it is natural as breathing to avoid them. To induce conversation with them you must consent to talk about their personal experience, and that is not attractive. Nobody can make their own experience an interesting theme, only as it is an exposition of truths of general interest. To have fellowship with each other, we must all be interested in THE TRUTH; that is a common medium; there is a sphere for infinite music; we shall never exhaust the subject; the more we get out of personalities, and deal with universal truth, the more capable we shall be of fellowship. Every new truth we learn, is a new point of contact with other spirits, and increases our power of giving and receiving happiness.

If R. would turn round and instead of trying to interest others in his personal affairs, interest himself in universal truth, he would have no difficulty about fellowship. He would find himself in the very element of social freedom. If he would take up some study, entirely forget himself, and apply his mind to abstract truth, with perseverance, for a long season, he would be a much better judge of his own experience than he is

now. At present he is illogical—mystical—it is very difficult for him to make his experience intelligible to others. There is a tendency to fanaticism, to excitement, high and low spirits. We are as unfit for happiness, as we are exposed to suffering, without that balance of character which a *sound mind* gives.

Criticism of Miss E.

SUMMARY OF REPORT.

E. is remarkably outspoken and impulsive, and so her faults are decided and well known. She is a fine specimen of the vital temperament, has great exuberance of life and animal spirits—would live on laughing and frolic—is ardent in her affections, and lively in her antipathies. In circumstances of ordinary life she would not have been corrected of her faults ; simple parental authority would not have been sufficient. She would have ruled all around her, and hen-pecked her husband to the last degree. But the Community is too much for her, especially as she is wise enough to give herself up to its criticism. The elderly people criticise her for disrespect and inattention. She will fly through a room, on some impulsive errand of generosity perhaps, leave both doors open, and half knock down any body in her way. Her laughing propensity was criticised ; some thought she could dispense with half her usual indulgence, while one recommended as a compromise, that she should cease laughing at others' calamities : any little mishap of another or mistake of her own—accidents which would naturally make others sober, invariably make her laugh. She has a touch of vanity,—likes to look in the glass, and plumes herself on her power of charming. She indulges in unfounded antipathies, and

whims of taste, while she is likely to be carried out of bounds by her attractions. With regard to her wonderful exuberance of life, gayety and impetuosity of temper, it is her gift, the inheritance of her youth and constitution, and no one would have it changed. Like many another good passion, it would be bad if allowed to act under the influence of selfishness, but of itself it is an element very much to be prized in society. Though E. is active in business, industrious and useful, we should miss her more for what she is, than for what she does. We must cure her of her coarseness, and teach her to be gay without being rude, and respectful without being demure.

[Scraps from the Reports of a Criticism Club.]

S. has a great deal of what is usually termed manliness. He has encouraged the stern side of his nature, and discouraged the gentle side. He seems to be ashamed to show the softness and tenderness that he feels. He needs to know that these two phases of character are not irreconcilable. They are in fact necessary complements of each other. S. seems to be afraid that he will sacrifice strength by becoming subordinate to his spiritual superiors. Receptivity to God does not diminish true manliness: on the contrary, by being receptive one gains rather than loses strength. No one can be like Christ without having both the lion and the lamb in his character.

Q. is subject to strong personal likes and dislikes, and he is so frank and fearless that he takes no pains to hide the one or the other. He should make his likes and dislikes conform to the truth. Neither our estimation of an individual's character nor our affection for

him should be determined by our personal relations to him, but by his relations to general society and to Christ. If Q. would stop his prejudices and seek Christ's mind about persons he might find good where he has never seen it before, and his heart would flow out in new directions, obedient to impulses from heaven.

The true spirit loves service—loves to be fruitful. The false spirit seeks ease and hates faithful industry—counts many kinds of labor as degrading. One kind of labor may be superior to another in furnishing better conditions for the development and exercise of talent, and one kind of labor may expose a person to greater temptations than another; but in itself considered no labor that is necessary to be done can be degrading; and it is possible to make every kind of labor an ordinance of personal improvement and worship.

No criticism by others can take the place of self-criticism—the criticism we give ourselves when we feel that God is dealing with us and that we must be thoroughly sincere. Then we hate whatever is evil in ourselves and separate ourselves from it, judging our past life with a sincerity impossible to others. And that kind of self-judgment is indispensable if we would come into unity with the pure life of Christ.

When persons realize that God draws nigh to the broken and contrite, they will feel that pride and self-will are enemies to be subdued rather than friends to be cherished.

No one has a right to determine what he will do simply with reference to his own interests; we are all under

responsibilities to God and the universe, and are in duty bound to exercise all our gifts, and consent to the mortification of blunders, and take whatever criticism may come, and not allow egotistical modesty to keep us from being as useful as we can be.

Whatever we do even in the most private manner is still done before God and the angels. They watch our blunders just as we watch the blunders of our children when they begin to walk, and doubtless exercise the same charity toward our experiments that we do toward those of our little ones. All they ask is that we persevere in our efforts to improve.

It is a rule among business men that a letter that is worth writing is worth copying. I would go further, and say—a letter that is worth writing is worth writing well, so that you would not be ashamed to have it go before the universe; and any thing that is worth saying is worth saying well, so that it will bear criticism; and any thing that is worth doing is worth doing well. Away with shiftlessness and excuses for wrong and foolish doings of all kinds!

W. has lacked the practical and earnest development of character that is so common to the descendants of the Puritans, and this is probably due, in part at least, to the circumstances of his birth and education. He is of French and English extraction, born in India; and the predominance of French blood is indicated by his mercurial habits—vivacity, free gesticulation, etc. He never knew the necessity of working for a living; but artistic culture stimulated in him the love of the beautiful. He has great pleasure in the enjoyment of the sen-

ses, and with an artistic eye and taste nature attracts him strongly and captivates his attention. The effect has been to make his life too superficial and give him undue contentment with the show of things. This proclivity was manifest in still greater excess in his children, and proved disastrous to their prosperity and well-being. His vivacity, culture and refined taste make him an interesting companion and a desirable element in society; and this is steadily increased by the deeper tone his life acquires in the earnest school of Communism.

H.'s love of approbation makes him a poor critic. He has good judgment of character, but he is fearful that he may displease by speaking the truth. This is a serious fault, and prevents his rapid improvement. One cannot become a good medium of Christ's spirit while fearful that he will say or do something displeasing to those around him. He must promptly obey his best instincts irrespective of his fellows. He must be ready to sacrifice all human approbation—be thoroughly sincere—utter the word of truth given him whether it pleases or displeases. God will not choose for his mediums men who do not care more for his approbation than for all else beside; and such men, we may be sure, will sooner or later command the highest approbation of society.

S. was highly commended for the improvement she has made. She was naturally attractive, and was on that account petted and flattered when young. Criticism and suffering have made her an earnest, God-fearing woman. She has found Christ in her heart, and no longer depends on outward circumstances for happiness. She is very receptive to good influences, and she delights in the society of her superiors. This is one of the secrets of

her great improvement. She is vivacious, and diffuses sunshine and joy wherever she goes. Her vivacity, however, sometimes tempts her into frivolity. We would not have her less vivacious, but would have her vivacity express seriousness as well as mirth. Mr. Noyes once wrote in an album: "If you listen to the strains which are ever sounding through creation, you will find that God's everlasting melody is at once full of seriousness and full of mirth. If you would make the tones of your heart a harmonious accompaniment to that melody, you must first take lessons in seriousness (which is the soul of all God's music), and then you must learn to combine seriousness with mirth, as these are combined in all the harmonies of nature and the Bible."

V. has this serious fault, that her words are often better than her deeds. She has a bright intellect, and seems to apprehend the truth readily; her understanding assents to it and apparently rejoices in it; but for some cause it does not sufficiently modify her external conduct. Consequently her words are at a discount—like the notes of banks that have issued more paper than they can redeem. Our deeds form the specie basis of our characters, and if they fall behind our words the latter will not long be taken at par. Such a condition of things is deplorable, and must be the result of unbelief. If the heart sincerely believes in God it will express itself in deeds truer and better than any words.

L. is very earnest, and yet his discourses in public and private are often unacceptable and unedifying. We involuntarily feel that his exhortations savor of legality rather than of grace. He needs to consider that *being* is far more important than *doing*, and should seek to attract

persons to his standard of excellence by his own life-example rather than to drive them to it by words. In his zeal to improve others he ignores many faults in his own character. In other ways his zeal defeats itself. For one thing, it leads him to introduce the most profound religious subjects into conversation with little reference to the proprieties of time and place. We would not have him less earnest or wise, but more winning.

A. is another earnest man; but he fails to some extent of the grace of God because he is too personal and egotistical in seeking improvement. He makes himself too much the center of his prayers and strivings. If he could induce God to do as he wishes it would evidently fill him with spiritual pride. He needs to make God's great interests the main object for which he labors, and link his personal interests to them. The Lord is interested in our improvement chiefly as it will help on his great work in the world. He will see that the personal interests of those heartily devoted to his service are well cared for; but we need not ask him to give any special attention to us as individuals seeking improvement independently. As Mr. Noyes says in one of his Home-Talks: "Private interests have their day, but they are limited in their nature, and will last only so long as they are profitable to the great public interest. If we have any interests separate from the public interest, we may be assured that God has made no arrangement for their satisfaction; but so far as we have identified ourselves with the public interest, success and prosperity are insured to us for time and eternity; governmental arrangements are every-where made to prosper the agents

of that interest. The actual *couriers of heaven* will find *relays* of horses waiting for them in all directions; but persons who travel for their own objects must get along as best they can: possibly they may have to go on foot."

Evil spirits love darkness and work in darkness. If persons do not let into their hearts the daylight of heaven, they must not wonder that bats and owls make their home in them.

The word *imprudence* describes the great cause of many persons' bad spiritual experience: they are imprudent in listening to evil thoughts and suggestions—imprudent in the use of the tongue—imprudent in exposing themselves to temptations. We are dealing with a watchful, subtle enemy, who is ready to take advantage of every mistake; and the results of our imprudence are measured, not by our own intentions, but by the power of the enemy. But if the devil is subtle, God is more subtle. His sagacity is infinite, and it is accessible to us; with it we can conquer at every point in the great contest with evil.

Evil spirits are always in a hurry and will not wait to be tested; good spirits, on the contrary, love the judgment—love to be put to trial, and are never in such haste that they cannot wait for it.

To tease children to be obedient and otherwise treat them so that they do not expect to obey promptly is real cruelty. It keeps alive in them the spirit of disobedience; whatever obedience they have is forced, and so good for nothing. It fosters cant and hypocrisy in them. Mercy and wisdom alike require that even small children

should be taught to obey the first time spoken to, and never wait to be coaxed into obedience.

Children often get into the major position toward their parents and manage them and bring them into bondage. This is all wrong. Much as we love our children, their good and our own good require that we should keep the major position toward them and control them. And we must not let our happiness be dependent upon them. We must ever realize that their destiny as well as ours is in the hands of God. Let your heart be dependent on your children for happiness and they will instinctively find it out, and soon act as though you were made for their pleasure. The reverse of that is nearer the truth. In a certain sense children are made for the happiness of their parents—made to be dependent on them and serve them. But children can not be made to feel this unless it is a reality in the hearts of the parents. Many persons live and labor as though the great end of existence were to serve their children, and especially to see that all their superficial wants are satisfied: they have little thought of disciplining and educating them for God: that is left to take care of itself.

M.—J. has a good heart—is really sympathetic and tender—is chivalric in his devotion to particular friends, but his general manner is repelling; he does not act out his better nature. He is apt to appear cross, and as if he owed nothing to any body. However, this is more true of him as he was than as he is. I can see he improves from year to year.

P.—His whole manner is sensational. He talks for effect and walks for effect, he flourishes his handkerchief for effect; takes out his letters and watch for effect.

When he talks at the table it is not for fellowship, but to make an impression on the whole table. A little simplicity would improve him very much. His business character is excellent. We never had a young man in his place that did better, and he is thoroughly loyal. He is very fond of liberty—likes a great sweep, but I never heard of his wanting to leave the Community.

S.—His loyalty has stood a great deal of strain. He has had some very hard criticisms, and much mortifying experience. I think he has a foundation of religious principle—really loves the truth.

N.—J. has naturally a good deal of what I should call the high-toned Southern tendency in him. It is one of the hardest elements in the world to take criticism and surrender itself to the meekness and gentleness of Christ. It is masculinity carried to excess. There is not woman enough about him.

H.—I am bored sometimes with his making a long conversation about a little matter that could be disposed of with a few words.

N.—He has a good deal of natural fluency. There is hardly a young man in the Community that I would set to plead a case in court quicker than I would him. He has what lawyers call the "gift of gab," and it is a very good faculty; I like to listen to his talk just to notice his power of expression and persuasion. When he sits down with me we generally have a pretty smart pull at it, but I enjoy it. I wish we could have the full benefit of his gift. I wish he would come forward into the front rank in our meetings and let loose his tongue in the right way.

T.—I have heard him express some discontent that he was not sent to college; he thinks he has not had the

opportunity for education that he should have had. I think he has had a great deal of opportunity that he has not improved. He is not a natural student; he loves active life and a thousand excitements that interfere with study. C. will get an education here in our library and not ask any favors of the colleges, because he loves books.

N.—I think J. has received from the Community an education on one point that is perhaps as important as any education of the brain, and that he would never have received at college nor anywhere else, and the Community has given him this education at a great deal of expense; it has taught him to overcome his appetite for tobacco. Only in the Community would he have got rid of that bondage. In college it would have been perpetuated; he would have become a hopeless slave to the habit. It is a mercy to him that he never did go to college—that the Community kept him at home where he could be saved from that great enemy. If ever any one came near going to hell, he came near it through his appetite for tobacco, and instead of complaining of the Community, he has great reason to be thankful to it for saving him from ruin. Then the education of his heart, spirit and temper which has been going on in the Community is worth more to him than any amount of school-learning. If he had received a college education it would not have helped his temper, or helped him to overcome evil of any kind. In all probability his general character would have grown worse and worse. Sometime he will be more thankful for this education of his heart and better nature, than for any thing he could have got in college. It is an education he needs more than most young men. There is a fiery, rebellious element in his

nature that is just calculated to make him a rowdy—a reckless dare-devil. If the Community succeeds in making him a quiet, good-natured, well-behaved man, it will succeed in giving him the best education he can get in this world or any other. That is the education he is getting, and I expect he will graduate at last with honor.

[Discussion of Commendatory Criticism by a Club.]

A.—We have made more use of criticism heretofore in its negative form of censure than in its positive form of praise: but I think we shall be able sometime to make a very useful exercise of criticism in the way of analyzing *beauties* of character and bestowing praise where it is deserved. This must ultimately be the main exercise of criticism. It will be more edifying when we can do it right than fault-finding. The positive is always better than the negative. Paul exhorts the Philippians, "If there be any praise, if there be any virtue, any thing true, pure, lovely and of good report, to think on these things."

B.—I should infer from Paul's manner of expression that the Philippians had been obliged to give a good deal of attention to the criticism of evil, and that he wanted them to turn their attention to the commendation of good, and to things that they could praise.

C.—I do not see why we should not have just the same freedom to praise persons who are pleasing as we have to complain of those who are annoying. If a person has any thing on his mind respecting another, in the way of praise, why should he not be just as free-spoken as he is when he feels bound to bring out something he sees to condemn? Sometimes an individual

will go along in a bad spirit till the whole Community are displeased with him; and then he will be proposed as a subject for criticism, and every one will tell their mind about him. Why should not provocation work the other way, and the approbation of the Community burst out in a general manifestation, when persons take a course to excite it?

A.—One objection to such proceedings hitherto has been that so few persons have been able to bear praise.

D.—That is to be considered, whether it will have a good effect upon the subject.

A.—I don't know but there is another obstacle, *i. e.*, a little danger of exciting envy and jealousy. Persons may find it easy to keep calm and in a judicial state, when a case is up for ordinary criticism, and yet find it difficult to hear another praised without any excitement of personal feelings.

G.—I do not apprehend any serious difficulty on either of the points that have been mentioned. The maturity and general stamina of our society is such that I think it could bear to have praising free, without any danger from the spirit of glorying on the one side, or jealousy on the other.

A.—The point to be singly aimed at in the matter is this: not to glorify the individual, but as far as any glorification is concerned, to exalt Christ, and to hold up edifying examples to the Community. We will not praise any one for his own glorification; but if we see a chance where we can praise a person to the glory of Christ, and inflame the hearts of the Community with the desire of imitation—if we can diffuse a good spirit and edify by it, then we should feel bound to praise.

E.—I see that this is an important department of criticism, and we shall find it a more difficult duty, I imagine, to praise the good we discern, without partiality and without hypocrisy, than it has been to criticise evil.

A.—We must look to Jesus Christ for wisdom to enable us to do justice to one another and to him; and to make the most of what he has done among us in individual cases for the benefit of the whole—so that good in one case shall be the seed of good in other cases, and by criticism shall be scattered and multiplied.

D.—The first thing to be regarded in criticism of any kind is *love of the truth*—thorough and absolute—and in the first stage of practice it is more likely to lead to *severe* love of the truth, which will deal with criticism in the way of censure rather than in the way of praise. We should have been far more likely to run into superficial dealing with character if we had practiced the praising part of criticism first.

A.—The value of criticism in the way of praise will depend on the faithfulness of our minds to get at the *causes* of the pleasure we feel in a good character. Merely *liking* a person is not enough: we must be able to give a reason for our estimate; and that will require more loyalty to the truth than is exactly natural in the present state of things. When we are annoyed by evil, we feel it so sensibly that we are willing to dig to get at the causes of it. But when we enjoy good, we are willing to enjoy it, without caring for the causes of it. We are not likely to use such strenuous exertion to get at the causes of good as we are of evil. There is not the same apparent necessity. There is a necessity in one case that pushes us to earnest investigation; but in the other we feel comfortable, and do not see any occa-

sion to inquire into the causes of the comfort we feel. Is there not some motive that will set us to work in this direction?

B.—I believe that *love* is as strong a motive as discomfort; and that we shall be able to use all the critical faculty that has been developed in our school under the pressure of necessity, in the way of detecting and praising good, under the guidance of attraction.

G.—It is very evident that in the final state, this kind of criticism will be one of the principal employments and enjoyments.

E.—When I was at P. there was something in the spirit and behavior of a lad there, a member of the Community, that was so edifying and beautiful to me, that I was really burdened till I had given expression to my feelings. I brought his case up in the evening meeting, and found it was acceptable to the whole family to have a chance to praise him.

F.—This was an instance where criticism proceeded from the necessity of love.

A.—What is called *making love* is a sort of attempt at criticism in the way of praise. It is an attempt to express a sense of beauty and goodness. But it allows a person to express feelings that he cannot give any reason for, and to praise his sweetheart merely because it is a musical operation to himself and her. It will be beautiful if we can make love to one another in such a way as to satisfy our love of sincerity, our love of Christ, and love of the public interest. If what we say has the ring of truth in it, and we feel that we are not talking to man but to God—not for the gratification of an individual, but of the Community—it will be an improvement on common love-making.

C.—There are two kinds of beauty of character; one is what we may call natural beauty, such as we may possess in a natural state, and the other cultivated beauty, that is, beauty of a moral and spiritual character, formed in the school of Christ; are both equally the object of praise?

B.—I should say that our natural gifts are Community property as much as any value we possess. We belong to God just as we are, and our personal talents and peculiarities are for distribution; and it seems a good way to effect the communism of any good gift to praise it—to hold it up for the contemplation of all.

G.—I think that our experience has brought us to a point where we can discern Christ in one another, and praise will go home where it is due, and not be absorbed by the individual.

A.—As a basis for the appreciation of all good, perhaps we might take this view profitably: Beauties in us are evidently resolvable into two sorts, as has been suggested; natural beauties, and those which are of a moral and spiritual kind. The last, traced back to their source, are the manifestations of a *good spirit*. Good organizations and good spirits, then, comprise all that we have to enjoy and estimate and praise. Now observe that both of these are strictly and in downright truth referable to God. Certainly our organizations and natural faculties are just as much the work of God as flowers and trees are. We can not boast of them with any kind of reason, nor give praise one to another on account of them. It is all a mistake—a delusion of egotism—to appropriate any praise in reference to them to self. Then in reference to what we may call cultivated character, or a good spirit, that again comes from Christ.

In one way or another, no matter how, we are sure that Christ is the fountain of all spiritual good; and if there is a good spirit manifest in any person, we are sure it is because he has had communication with Christ. It is impossible to have a good spirit without communication with Christ. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life." So there is no chance for appropriative self-complacency in respect to the spirit we have. If we can keep these principles clear in our minds, I do not see any difficulty in the way of praising so as to honor the truth.

G.—If we have not reached the point where we are satisfied that there is none good but one, that is God, we have not reached the point necessary for our salvation. Every one must arrive at that understanding some time.

A.—With these views, we shall be just as free to praise natural beauty as spiritual. Both of them come from God. The ascetic philosophy which despises natural beauty and glorifies only moral and spiritual qualities, ought rather to be called the *aristocratic* philosophy. There is partiality in it. If we bring God into the matter, really and sincerely, as the author of all beauty, we level every thing. It is due to him that we should appreciate and praise external beauty where it exists, as well as internal beauty. We are bound to honor him as a Creator as well as a Savior.

HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

ILLUSTRATIONS of Mutual Criticism might be multiplied to any extent. Those already given are occupied with the delineations of personal faults and virtues, and show what place criticism holds in the Community school as a regulator of morals, and a harmonizing power. They give also some idea of its value as an agent of spiritual improvement—of its purifying and justifying work—which is often carried into the past life of the members, and is then termed HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

It is found in many cases, that present difficulties of experience root themselves in the past life, and can be reached only by a process that carries light and judgment and separation clear back to their beginning. A yielding to temptation in former years, by which we admitted the spirit of evil and defiled our consciences, or the entanglements of evil associations through friendship and love, though they may have been long excused and forgotten, were nevertheless vital seeds in our life, and are found, on close scrutiny, still active, and operating in our central experience. Life is a ball, made up by the winding on of the thread of our passing experience; and whatever we have wound in the past, whether good or bad, is still in the

ball: it is vitally our own, and in a very important sense enters into our present character. To state the principle in the fewest words, We are what our past lives have made us. With this view, many have entered upon the course of historical self-criticism; and the result has been, numerous confessions of wrongs in the past, that had lain secret—perhaps half-forgotten—but necessarily darkening and poisonous to present experience.

HYGIENIC CRITICISM.

But much as we prize Criticism for effects which are purely spiritual and moral, we must not neglect to speak of it as a hygienic agency. How often have we witnessed a sudden and marked improvement in bodily health as the result of sincere truth-telling. We claim, in fact, to have discovered

A NEW CURATIVE.

A Community writer says: "We have not found, like a certain quack advertiser, an all-healing medicine in a 'common pasture weed,' nor are we prepared to show nostrums with the 'retired Physician whose sands of life are nearly run out;' but we have found, and seen used with the best effect in many instances of sickness, a curative agent that is not far-brought nor expensive, but which we can confidently recommend to our readers as of exceeding value; viz., CRITICISM. It is a common custom here, for a person who may be attacked with

any disorder, to apply this remedy by sending for a committee of persons, in whose faith and spiritual judgment he has confidence, to come and criticise him. The result when administered sincerely, is almost universally to throw the patient into a sweat and to bring on a reäction of his life against disease, breaking it up and restoring him soon to usual health. We have seen it take effect at an advanced stage of chronic disease, and raise a person up apparently from death's door. It seems a somewhat heroic method of treatment when one is suffering in body, to apply a castigation to the life through the spiritual or moral part; but this is precisely the thing needed to cleanse and purify the system from disease. We have tried it and found it to be invaluable. To all who have faith in Christ as a physician we can commend this prescription as a medium for conveying his healing and life. If you are sick, seek for some one to tell you your faults, to find out the weakest spot in your character and conduct; let him put his finger on the very sore that you would like most to keep hid. Depend upon it there is the avenue through which disease gets access to you. And if the sincerity which points this out and and opens it to the light, hurts, and is mortifying for the time, it is only a sign that the remedy is applied at the right place and is taking effect."

Take an example from the Community records:

"S. P. having a bad cold and symptoms of a run of fever, tried the *Criticism-cure* and was immediately relieved. She was on her bed in a state of pain and restlessness, when a friend mentioned to her the above remedy, as having been successfully applied in similar cases. Having some faith in it, she arose and had it administered

without delay. The operation was not particularly agreeable—there is no method of cure that is—but it was short and speedily efficacious. One secret of its efficacy is, it stops the flow of thought toward the seat of difficulty, and so tends directly to reduce inflammation. At the same time it has a very bracing, invigorating effect. In the present case, it went right to the cause of the disease, which was discovered to be a spirit of *fear*, throwing open the pores and predisposing the subject to the attack. S. P. had been brought up in a bad habit in this respect, expecting with every exposure to take cold—and then expecting to have it go on to a serious cough, and so on—fear realizing itself. Criticism stopped this false action, and not only made her well in the first instance, but by breaking up this fear it has given her comparative security against future attacks. It requires some fortitude and self-denial in the patient, when he thinks he needs sympathy and nursing, to take criticism instead; but it is well known, that to rouse the will to strong exertion is more than half a cure. The criticism-remedy professes to be universal, and is recommended for trial to all the afflicted.

Individuals may find it difficult in some cases to get access to this remedy, but it is worth some pains to try. Every family should have the apparatus. Children can have the benefit of it in forms adapted to their age. A little wholesome correction is sometimes the best medicine for an ailing child; and it is certainly a more merciful remedy than nauseous pills or castor-oil. Quite young children, however, can take a family criticism in the regular way, and get the advantage of it.

The theory of disease which this remedy adapts itself to is, that disease originates not in the blood, or stomach,

or nerves, but in the spirit; and that a decisive operation there affects the whole system."

Here is another example on a large scale:

Some twelve years ago that fell destroyer, the diphtheria, made its appearance in the Community. It first attacked the young men, then the young women, then the middle-aged, and finally spared no class. One hundred and twelve persons were affected. Three of the first cases proved fatal; two other deaths soon occurred. All known remedies were tried; the doctors were appealed to; but nothing was found to stay the scourge until criticism was brought into the field in connection with the free use of ice; and after the new treatment was fairly begun no death by diphtheria occurred, and most of the cases were substantially cured in a few hours. When the disease had been fairly routed an investigation showed that not one out of fifty-nine cases of clear diphtheria, treated with ice and criticism, was lost: fifty persons acknowledged sensible benefit from criticism: twenty-two testified that the benefit thus received was instantaneous; and all who reported thought criticism a powerful and useful medicinal agent. The following is a specimen of the testimony:

"My experience in respect to *criticism* was new, and to me interesting. I will relate it as briefly as possible. I was taken at night with a sore throat, which continued to grow worse, and the next day I had all the symptoms of the diphtheria. Being no better at night, but rather

worse, I sent for a committee. Their criticism immediately threw me into a profuse sweat, till I felt as though I had been in a bath; and before the committee left the room, my headache, backache and fever were all gone. The criticism had an edge to it, and literally separated me from the spirit of disease that was upon me. I slept well, and in the morning called myself *well*, as indeed I was, with the exception of weakness. I attribute my recovery entirely to the Spirit of Truth administered in *criticism*, and believe it to be the best remedy for soul and body."

The new method of treatment in diphtheria was dramatized by a member of the Community and rehearsed finally on the stage. We give the libretto below, as a curiosity:

MEDICINE FOR THE DIPHTHERIA.

A HIT AT OLD NICK.

Dramatis Personæ.

GEORGE, *the patient.*
COMMUNITY DOCTOR.
SARAH, *a waiter.*
SEVEN CRITICS.
MARTIN, *a singer.*
A DEMON, *and* AN ANGEL.

Patient discovered sleeping; but restless, starting and groaning as in a fit of nightmare. A skeleton-demon appears behind, shaking a dart at him. At a dreadful groan, enter Doctor.

Doctor.—(*Shaking the patient*). George, George, wake up! What ails you?

Patient.—(*Griping his throat and staring wildly about*). I've had a horrible dream. There was a

skeleton standing there as sure as you live. I saw the flames in his eye-holes, and he shook his dart at me. Did I make a noise?

Doctor.—Yes, you groaned as if you were dying.

Patient.—I thought my time had come, and I don't know but it has now. My throat feels strangely. I believe I've got the diphtheria. I was dreaming—

Doctor.—Never mind your dreams—let me look at your tonsils. (*Looks in his mouth*). Sure enough—you've got it—canker and all. (*Feels his wrist*).—Pulse going like a trip-hammer. But your time has not come yet. This is only the sixtieth case we've handled this winter. We'll put you through the old course. (*Goes to the door and calls*). Sarah, bring some chopped ice. (*To the patient*). The first thing to be done is to kill the fungus.

Patient.—Kill the fungus! What do you mean by that?

Doctor.—Don't you know that a crop of toad-stools is growing in your throat? That white stuff that people call canker is a vegetable. In the microscope it looks like a cauliflower. Ice kills it. Cauliflowers can't grow in ice-water. (*Sarah brings the ice*). Here, eat all you want of this. It is cheap at this time of year, and some folks say it is as good as candy. You are not frightened are you?

Patient.—No. But for mercy's sake keep mother out of my sight; for she will be frightened, and her doleful looks and talk will make me a coward.

Doctor.—That's a good idea! Keep clear of your mother when you are going into battle. What you want now is not sympathy, but the soldier spirit. Do you believe in God?

Patient.—Yes.

Doctor.—Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

Patient.—Yes.

Doctor.—Let us see how much you believe in him. When he was on earth he was a very great doctor of men's *bodies*.

Patient.—Yes, I know he cured all sorts of diseases.

Doctor.—Do you believe he can cure the diphtheria?

Patient.—Of course he can.

Doctor.—Keep that idea bright. The next thing to be done is to give you a sweat.

Patient.—I thought our folks didn't believe in steaming and packing.

Doctor.—They haven't much faith in those things; but I reckon I can give you a sweat in another way. Sarah, there is a criticising committee in the Reception-room. Tell them to come and give George a benefit. (*Sets out the chairs, talking meanwhile to the patient*). We'll put you in a truth-bath that will start the sweat better than steam or feather beds. Don't you want to hear the plain truth about your faults?

Patient.—Yes, I'm not afraid of the truth.

Doctor.—Well, the devil is, and this is the way we shall scare him off. (*Enter seven critics and take their seats*). Now, gentlemen, let us make short work. George wants help. The old tiger, diphtheria, has got him by the throat. We all know that George is on the whole a good fellow, but what he wants, and what will do him good now, is not praise, but the sharpest criticism. F., will you begin?

[Here followed a deliberate overhauling of the patient's character, general and special, in several rounds, by the seven critics; but as such honest exhibitions are not

very pleasant to unaccustomed tastes, and as it is somewhat difficult to do justice to the actual practice of the Community in a fictitious scene, we omit the details of the criticism, leaving them to the reader's imagination; only mentioning that toward the conclusion of the session, the patient was observed to mop his face from time to time with his handkerchief, as though something were coming to the surface.]

Doctor.—That will do, gentlemen. I think George ought to thank you for a good washing. (*Committee pass a pleasant word with the patient, and exit*). Now George, you see yourself as others see you; and (*feeling the patient's face and hands*) you're in a fine sweat—got it easier too than you could by steam and red pepper. Fever's all broken up. You'll be all right to-morrow.

Patient.—(*Getting up and straightening himself*). I do feel better.

Doctor.—Don't be in a hurry to get well; you know they criticised you for going to extremes. Lie down and go to sleep, and I'll warrant you'll see something better than old Bones with his dart. (*Patient lies down*). I'll give you an opiate too. Martin! Where is Martin? (*Enter Martin*). Here, Martin, is a chance for your genius; I want you to sing that boy to sleep, and to pleasant dreams.

Martin.—What shall I sing?

Doctor.—Sing that song about the boy's guardian angel, that I heard you practicing the other day.

Martin.—I'll try.

(*Sings. At the last line of each verse, a kneeling angel appears behind and above the sleeper*).

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

A dying mother blessed her boy,
As earth was fast receding;
Her faith grew bright;—she saw on high
His guardian angel pleading.

The boy was man;—the strife of life
Was fierce, and he was bleeding;
But through the fight his faith still saw
His angel ever pleading.

The man was old;—his eye was dim;
His path toward night seemed leading;
But through the dark his faith still saw
His angel ever pleading.

The old man entered death's last shade,
Its horrors never heeding;
For now, as when his mother died,
His angel still was pleading.

[*Curtain descends.*

RELATIONS TO COMMUNISM.

It is not easy to over-rate the usefulness of criticism in its relation to Community life. There is hardly a phase of that life in which it does not play an important part. It is the regulator of industry and amusement—the incentive to all improvement—the corrector of all excesses. It governs and guides all. Criticism, in short, bears nearly the same relation to Communism as that which the system of judicature bears to ordinary society. As society cannot exist without govern-

ment, and especially without a system of courts and police, so *Communism cannot exist without Free Criticism.*

Communism is a new state of society, entirely different from familism or individualism; and every distinct form of society requires a particular mode of meeting and providing against offenses. Communism is so radical in its nature that it cannot exist under the ordinary means of justice and police: but in Free Criticism it finds its true corrective and protector.

Criticism has the same end in view that courts of law and police have; but it operates upon society differently in one important respect, *viz.:* while they pay attention exclusively to the *sensible diseases* of society or overt acts of iniquity, Criticism attacks the *insensible diseases* as well as the sensible ones. Open crimes are punished under the legal system of the world, but the interior character of men is not meddled with; and thus the real sources of crime remain untouched. Free Criticism undertakes to correct and improve *character*, so that there shall be no occasion for courts and police to deal with outbreaking vice. Separated as men are in ordinary social life, they may live with some degree of peace and comfort while the latent diseases of heart and mind are at work in them; but Communism brings people so closely together that insensible diseases become sensible, and they can-

not live together without purification of character far more perfect than any that exists in common society.

Thus we see Communism has a double power of improvement. It develops and discloses the littleness, meanness and selfishness of human nature, and at the same time provides an effectual remedy. Communism and Criticism are reciprocals reproducing each other. Criticism produces a state that is compatible with Communism, and Communism gives the opportunity and the strength and unity that is necessary to the most perfect expression of Free Criticism. We may love Free Criticism for the sake of the advantages of Communism; and on the other hand we may love Communism for the sake of the advantages of Free Criticism.

The popular imagination that Communism is impracticable is founded on an observation of the fact that human nature is full of insensible, moral diseases, which are sure to manifest themselves as soon as people come into close relations with each other. This prejudice is, however, manifestly predicated on the deficiency which Free Criticism supplies. People cannot fairly argue against Communism from any experiment the world has yet seen, unless they can show us an example where these two things which God designed to be joined together, have been put together. When they find a case where Free Criticism and Communism have

been united and failed, they will have a precedent that will apply, and not otherwise. A thorough system of Criticism in combination with Communism is a *new experiment*, and there is nothing in past experience that can possibly foretell to any scientific man what will be the result; but there are many things in the nature of the combination that foretell a good and superior state of society.

"Well," says the sanguine reformer, "if Free Criticism is all that is necessary to successful Communism, let us have Free Criticism, and go ahead. Where is the need of religion and inspiration?" We reply: Certainly, you can have Free Criticism without religion, and may derive great benefit from it; it is just what you ought to have, and all the more for your lack of religion. But Communism requires, as we have shown, far more thorough and deep-searching criticism than any less vital form of society, and we do not believe it possible to secure this without religion; but if you can demonstrate to the contrary, then indeed you have found the philosopher's stone, and can live happily in Communism without God. But our conviction is that you will fail without him in the criticism of the inner life; that he and the Bible furnish the only proper *standard* for that kind of criticism; that his Spirit alone furnishes the *discernment* necessary to it; that he alone furnishes the *love* required in its administration, and the

humility and desire for improvement necessary to its right reception; that nothing but religion, the earnestness of a life that has an eternal scope, and sees everlasting good on the one hand and everlasting evil on the other, is prepared to give or receive this highest kind of criticism, without which Communities will sooner or later shiver to pieces.

With this view the conditions of successful Communism are very clear. Communism is possible only on condition of such Free Criticism as "searcheth the heart and trieth the reins;" which, in our opinion, is only possible on condition of sincere faith in Christ.

We may appropriately conclude this branch of our subject with a few

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE SUBJECTS OF CRITICISM.

D. E. S. says:—"Wonderful effects on both body and mind are produced by Mutual Criticism. It has the power of the strongest tonics; and can, in fact, be so applied as to produce startling changes in the human body. But the most striking of all its effects is seen in its operations on the spiritual nature of man. Here it is indeed miraculous. It has wrought in my own spiritual nature, during the five years I have been in the Community, changes as great as were effected in all my previous life, though I was brought up in the bosom of a church and for many years earnestly desired spiritual improvement. I am now convinced that the great hindering cause to growth in spirituality is egotism; and for its removal, or destruction, criticism is one of the best agencies ever

put in practice. It brings to light even the most secret faults, leaving no hiding place for egotism to shelter itself in, and yet does this in a way to make us love those who criticise us. Criticism given in love, for the sole purpose of helping one to improve, cannot but cause good feelings in the heart of the criticised, and promote the growth of earnestness and love, and all the fruits of the spirit."

H. C. N. says:—"If there are those who from the first have taken kindly and naturally to criticism, I have not been one of them. In this respect I have found infinite occasion for repentance and regret, and the sorrow that one can feel who has ill-treated his best friend. I know the discouragement, the evil-thinking, the paralyzing chill that comes from not receiving criticism in the right spirit. I know also the other side, where the expression of criticism has been positively enjoyed, and the effect immediate and lasting; and I cannot forget how it has more than once saved my soul from the consequences of sin, and my body almost miraculously from disease and death."

G. N. M. says:—"I once had a criticism in which I was strongly tempted to resent the remarks of one individual. What was said by this person was wholly unlooked for by me, and to my first feelings seemed unjust and hard to bear. For several days, it rankled in my mind, causing me great unhappiness. I at length thought I would try to put the matter wholly out of my thoughts, but it kept continually recurring, bringing with it a feeling of bitterness that I had never before known. Seeing that it was likely to destroy my peace of mind, I resolved that I would try no more to thrust it away from me, but to summon all the sincerity and

humility I could and sit down and reflect upon it, calmly and prayerfully. The result was, that I saw clearly and acknowledged to myself, that the bitter pill at which I was tempted to rebel, was the *truest and best part of my criticism*. It was the only thing in my criticism that had really mortified and wounded my self-conceit, and in that I saw was its supreme value. I swallowed it, and have had no trouble with it since. It seemed to me at the time, that if a person was tempted to resist criticism he would naturally resist that which he most deserved; and the fact of there being such a temptation was a sure sign, in most cases, that he had been hit where he needed to be hit.

"My experience with criticism has led me to look upon it as a *great source of relief*. People who are accustomed to be clean physically, are uncomfortable, not to say miserable, when they become befouled. They have a kind of self-loathing that nothing but a bath can remove. The desire for spiritual cleansing by criticism seems to me to be just as natural and instinctive."

G. C. says:—"The truth given me by the criticism committee, was as truly a substance taken into my spirit, as a blue pill taken into my stomach would have been, and acted effectually upon my physical as well as upon my spiritual system. There was no *hocus pocus* about it. I don't guess, or believe; I *know* that the Spirit of Truth, the word of God, is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword or visible *materia medica*, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents

of the heart. I therefore can, after twenty-five years of experience, re-endorse *truth-telling* or *Community criticism* as good for food and good for medicine. It is good for the healthy, to *keep* them well; good for the sick to make them well; good for the good to make them better; and good for the discontented to make them happy. It cures egotism, self-conceit and all forms of disagreeable diseases resulting from the fungus growth of individual sovereignty."

G. says:—"Feuds in society, especially those caused by emulation are, we have reason to believe, often life-long and bitter, burdening the soul and wearing the life, like a weary, dragging ball and chain. They are practically incurable, just for the pitiful want of a meeting-ground for sincerity. But in a Community where free criticism prevails, envy and jealousy, and all other temptations which flesh is heir to, are necessarily short-lived. If a person is plagued with any of these ills, it is soon apparent to the sensitive, spiritual instincts of those around; or, more often, the individual himself confesses his trouble and asks for help. Criticism, restoring, cleansing, comforting and strengthening, is administered by loving brothers and sisters; and his trouble rolls off him as surely and palpably as Christian's pack is represented to have tumbled from his shoulders. It is a common thing to hear a man who has been through this searching ordeal say, "My relief is wonderful. I feel as though a load had been lifted off me." And, indeed, the whole aspect of the man is often changed by this wonderful purifier. Humbled and chastened, but justified and made clean, he has all the buoyant hope and elastic life of one just set free from prison. These results, which we see day by day and year by year, cannot

but increasingly glorify and endear to us Free Criticism or Truth-telling. It is our spiritual Turkish Bath, renovating and restoring the inner man. If it is sometimes sharper than a two-edged sword, it is again like the gentle rain from heaven, as tender and pitying as a father's love for his children. If it casts down evil, it exalts good with comely praise. Christ said, when he made the character of his mission known to the Jews, in the synagogue, 'I am come *to heal the broken hearted*, to preach *deliverance to the captives* and *to set at liberty them that are bruised*.' That describes exactly our sense of the work which Criticism is doing among us. In view of that work we can truly say that

> 'Doubt and trouble, fear and pain,
> And anguish all are shadows vain.'

They are shadows which flee before the sunlight of truth. 'Happy are they who know their errors and can put them to mending.'"

SHALL IT BECOME GENERAL?

We have shown how well the system of Mutual Criticism works in Community organizations, and how indispensable it is to their prosperity and harmony: but it was by no means a Community invention, having originated among missionary students in the very heart of the Congregational Church, and more truly belonging to that Church than to any Community. But no one sets up any

special claim to the invention; and why should its application be limited? Nordhoff suggests that it would be an excellent means of discipline in most families. Why not? The old forms of family government are painfully inefficient: they fail in thousands of cases to secure filial respect and obedience: and how often indeed are the natural relations of superior and inferior actually reversed, and parents ruled by their own children?

So also, the disrespect and insubordination that breed in a family, extend themselves to the school, and often make the teacher's vocation a long struggle against turbulence and inattention: that which should be a delight and a joyous labor is turned into exhausting and vexing toil.

Some new form of government for both family and school is demanded. As the country grows more populous, and men, women and children are brought into closer contact, the necessity becomes more imperative for improved arrangement for social order and control, both among the old and the young. With increased contact and intercourse the power of public opinion grows: and in the case of the young, where they are not subjected to special restraint, this soon becomes the breeder of lawlessness and disrespect. At the present time, society has nothing commensurate with its needs to regulate this great department. Neither the church, the newspaper, nor any of the prevailing agen-

cies at work among the people, is sufficient. Into this field, now white and ready for the harvest, we propose to send the agency of Free Criticism; and we invite the attention of all who are interested in the growth and education of men and women to examine its claims as a Regulator and Educator of Society. We say to the fathers and mothers of families, Submit yourselves one to another for criticism, and learn how to tell each other the truth in love. Tell each other plainly your faults, without giving or taking offense, and be honest with yourselves in endeavoring to improve in respect to the faults in your character which are pointed out. When you have learned this lesson of mutual sincerity, bring your children into the circle, and teach them how to submit themselves to your and each other's criticism. Let it all be "done decently and in order," and you will soon find that besides yourselves you have a kingly guest that meets with you. The Spirit of Truth will come within your doors and subdue your hearts with his presence. You will find unity taking the place of discord and strife; you will find love in the place of coldness and indifference; you will find docility and obedience in the place of disrespect and insubordination.

In this small beginning you will have a basis from which you may widen the field of operations. From family criticism you may advance and bring one or more families together for Mutual Criticism,

and so on, till the whole neighborhood is embraced. In such meetings all the organization necessary would be the selection of a moderator who should conduct the exercises by calling out the opinions of those present on the person or persons who offer themselves for criticism. Two general rules, however, must be adopted, to which all should give loyal adherence. These rules are:

1. In giving Criticism no person shall indulge in remarks suggested by personal enmity or resentment.

2. In receiving Criticism the subject shall quietly accept what is said to him, making no reply, save to correct obvious misstatement of facts.

In connection with this arrangement, or independently of it, let criticism be introduced into the public schools. The teacher in this case naturally becomes the moderator. Let him accustom his scholars to submit themselves to each other and to himself for criticism. If this is wisely done he will soon find the public opinion of the school on the side of obedience and good behavior, and secure an agency far more potent than all others for discipline and punishment. Children are plastic: their hearts are easily reached by sincerity: they may be easily molded by bringing to bear the power of truth among themselves, and from their superiors, in an organic way. Where difficulties are met by the teacher in the conduct of his school,

which do not yield to the power of criticism *within* the school, let him call in the fathers and mothers, and the trustees, and bring the power of their discernment and truthfulness to bear. In this way the school would assume its highest office as the regulator and educator of *personal character*, as well as of mental discipline and culture. From the common school the system would pass into the academy, the seminary, the college and the university, and they would become schools of true manhood and womanhood.

Every club organized for mutual acquaintance and improvement should adopt Mutual Criticism as its first ordinance.

Every social organization, large or small, whose objects are worthy and elevating will find in Free Criticism its best regulator, friend and co-laborer.

Especially should every Christian organization follow the example of the "Society of Brethren" at Andover in this respect. Among Christians Criticism ought to have the fullest scope, and produce its best results. Their professed desire for personal improvement should make them ready and willing subjects of the truth-telling ordeal; they at least should have the grace to avoid offense in both giving and receiving criticism. They will appreciate it not only for its personal benefits, but for its general results. Half a century ago it fostered the genuine missionary spirit in those whom the

Church now delights to honor. Give it opportunity and it will do the same to-day. Moreover, it is one of the best possible agencies for promoting and perpetuating a genuine revival of religion. We would say to any church desiring an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, organize yourselves into classes for Mutual Criticism: humble yourselves before God and one another, by first confessing your own sins, and then inviting, each from all, faithful sincerity in detecting your secret faults: in other words, wash yourselves in the Spirit of Truth, *and get your neighbors to help you;* and we will warrant you the best revival you ever experienced or witnessed.

To Communities, one and all, we say: If you desire harmony, and the removal of the occasions of irritation and evil-thinking; if you desire the personal improvement of your members and the consequent growth and prosperity of the general organization—adopt the system of Free Mutual Criticism. We confidently anticipate the time when every Community in the land will inscribe upon its banner, MUTUAL CRITICISM; and we certainly hope no new Community will ever be started that does not adopt Criticism as one of its fundamental principles.

And to all—whether religious or not, Communistic or not—we say: Do you wish to be made pure? The truth alone can purify you; *seek Criticism.* Do you wish to be noble and attractive to

all true hearts? The truth alone can ennoble you and fill you with heavenly magnetism: *seek Criticism.* Do you wish so to live that you will be prepared for the long future, whatever it may be? The truth can alone enable you to do this: *seek Criticism.* To offer one's self to his associates and friends to be sincerely told his faults of spirit and of outward action, and to freely accept the truth thus spoken, is one of the sublimest acts man can do. And it will bring to him unspeakable good—peace and harmony, unity and brotherhood.

Let no one think we are here urging a mere Utopian or fanciful scheme. We know by long experience that it is entirely practicable. We have tried Free Criticism in every form. We know that too much cannot be said in its praise. We know that under its reign alone, can men and women realize the infinite meaning of the words of Christ: "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" For thirty years we have been testing its power. We have tested it in the school, in the private family, in the small circle of mutual friends, and in the Community of three hundred members. In no place has it failed to be the most powerful improver of character, the strongest agent of unity and love, the most comprehensive and thorough system for the government of people on the smallest or the largest scale. Men have speculated and dreamed for thousands of years as to what is the

best and final form of government. We believe we have realized that highest dream in Free Criticism —THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TRUTH—Government by Free Criticism! It combines in itself all that is good in all other forms of Government. It is Theocratic, for in recognizing the Truth as King, it recognizes God who is the *source* of all truth, and whose Spirit alone can give power of genuine criticism. It is Aristocratic, in as much as the best critics have the most power. It is Democratic, inasmuch as the privilege of criticism is distributed to all classes, and the highest attainments and skill in it are open to every one.

We believe that it is only necessary for Free Criticism to be generally known in order to be every-where appreciated, and to have a shout go up from all true hearts in its favor. For ourselves we shall do all we can to make it popular. Free Criticism is our candidate for the Presidency.

INDEX OF SUBJECTS.

ORIGIN OF MUTUAL CRITICISM.

PAGE 3—13.

Its Missionary Birth, 5. First practiced among "The Brethren" in the Andover Theological Seminary, 6. Letter of Rev. John A. Vinton, 7. Letter of Rev. Wm. Arms, 11.

ITS DEVELOPMENT IN THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY.

PAGE 13—23.

Introduced into the Preliminary School at Putney, Vt., by one of the Andover "Brethren," 14. First Experiment there in Criticism, 15. Method pursued, 16. Modification at Oneida, 18. Criticism a Substitute for Backbiting and other forms of Evil Speaking, 21.

THEORETICAL VIEW.

PAGE 23—29.

Definition of Criticism, 23. Mutual Criticism an Extension to Character of the Principles applied in the criticism of Art and Literature, 24. Mutual Criticism calls for the Exercise of Higher Faculties, 25. It gives Voice and Power to the Golden Rule, 26. Faults of Unpracticed Critics, 26. Criticism and Phrenology, 27.

HOW TO GIVE CRITICISM.

PAGE 29—35.

Necessity of Love, Respect and Sincerity in the Critics, 30. True Motive in Criticism, 31. Fair Play for the Truth, 33. Wisdom in Criticism, 35.

HOW TO RECEIVE CRITICISM.

PAGE 36—43.

The Childish Spirit, 36. The Manly Spirit, 39. Illustrations of the Right and Wrong Way of receiving Criticism, 40. "Lying in Wait" for Improvement, 41.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF MUTUAL CRITICISM.

PAGE 44—70.

Criticism by a Committee, 44. Summary Report, 46. Harmony in Conversation, 48. Doing and Being, 50. Summary of a Criticism by a Committee, 53. Scraps from the Reports of a Criticism Club, 54. A Commendatory Criticism, 64.

HISTORICAL AND HYGIENIC CRITICISM.

PAGE 70—79.

Present Difficulties often traced to Past Experiences, 70. Criticism as a Curative Agency, 71. Illustrations, 72. Criticism and the Diphtheria, 75.

RELATION OF CRITICISM TO COMMUNISM.

PAGE 79—87.

Criticism Indispensable to Communism, 80. Criticism and Communism Reciprocals of each other, 81. Can Mutual Criticism flourish without Religion? 82. Testimonials from the Subjects of Criticism, 83.

SHALL MUTUAL CRITICISM BECOME GENERAL?

PAGE 87—94.

The Need of a New Power of Government, 37. Criticism a Regulator and Educator, 88. Two Rules of Criticism, 90. Criticism Commended to Families, Schools, Clubs, Churches, Communities, and to all Social Organizations, 91. Criticism not Utopian, 93. It is the best Form of Government, and our Candidate for the Presidency, 94.

PUBLICATIONS

OF THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY.

HISTORY OF AMERICAN SOCIALISMS. *By John* Humphrey Noyes. 678 pp. 8vo. J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia. Trübner & Co., London. Price, $3.00.

HOME-TALKS. *By John Humphrey Noyes.* 358 *pp.* 16mo. Price, $1.50.

THE TRAPPER'S GUIDE. *By Sewell Newhouse, and* other Trappers and Sportsmen. Price, $1.50.

SALVATION FROM SIN, THE END OF CHRISTIAN FAITH. By John Humphrey Noyes. An 8vo. pamphlet of 48 pages. Price, 25 cents.

SCIENTIFIC PROPAGATION. *By John Humphrey* Noyes. An 8vo. pamphlet of 32 pages. Price 25 cents.

HAND-BOOK OF THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY. An 8vo. pamphlet of 48 pages. Price, 25 cents.

DIXON AND HIS COPYISTS. A CRITICISM OF the Accounts of the Oneida Community in "New America," "Spiritual Wives," and kindred Publications. By John Humphrey Noyes. Price, 25 cents.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY COOKING, OR A DINNER without Meat. By Harriet H. Skinner. Price, 25 cents.